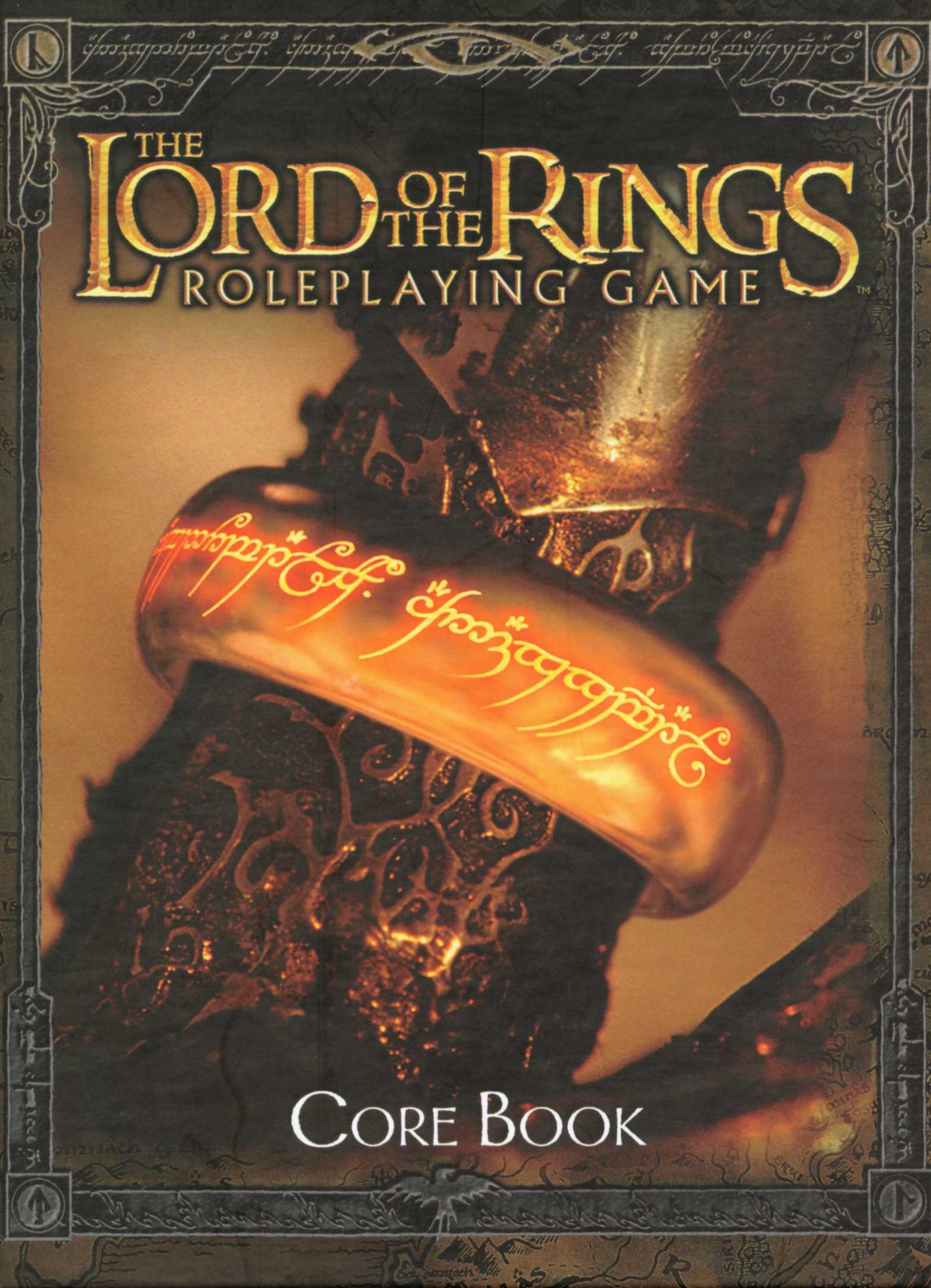
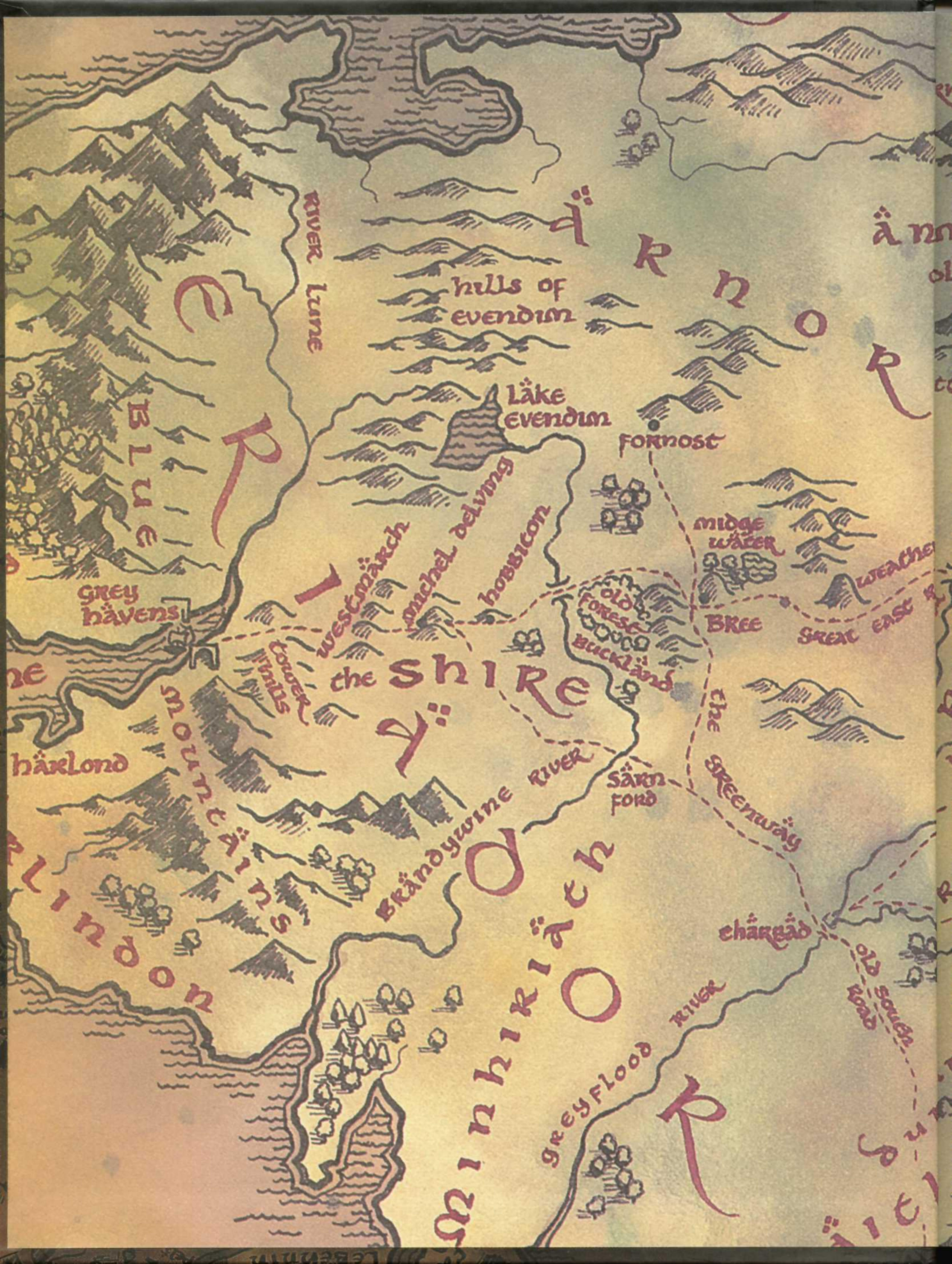


THE LORD OF THE RINGS
ROLEPLAYING GAME™

CORE BOOK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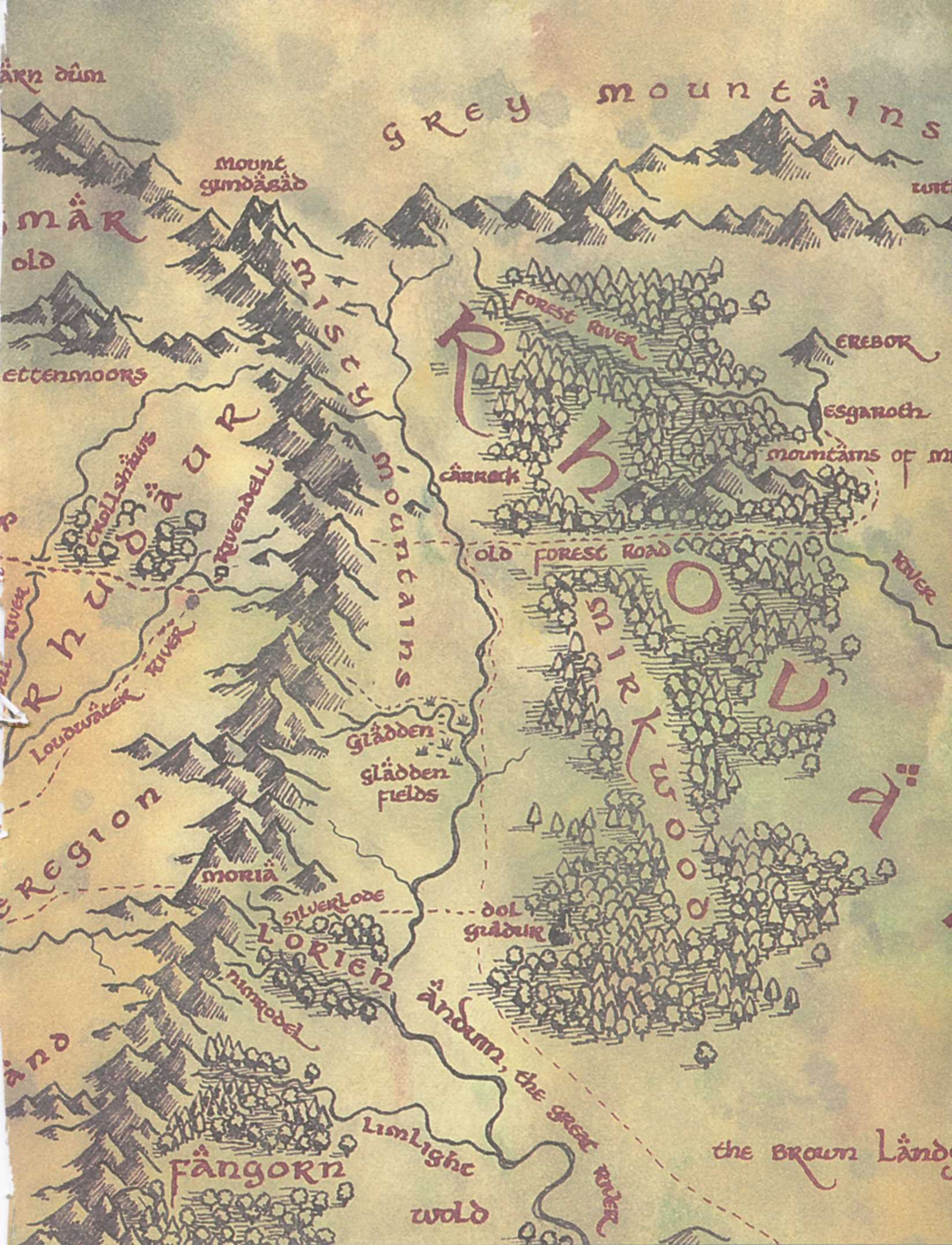
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THE LORD OF THE RINGS ROLEPLAYING GAME™

CORE BOOK

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DEDICATION: To Steven S. Long, who made this game what it is. Good luck in all your Heroic endeavors, Steve. We'll miss you.

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INTRODUCTION

' "There are some things that it is better to begin than to refuse, even though the end may be dark." '
— Aragorn, The Two Towers.

A land of magic and wonder, filled with stout Dwarves, wise Elves, amiable Hobbits, brave Men, and cruel Orcs. A realm of the free, threatened by the terrible darkness and oppression of the Shadow. A place of the imagination so vivid and marvellous that millions of people the world over have read its tales, studied its lore, learned its languages, and written thousands and thousands of pages discussing it. This is J.R.R. Tolkien's land of Middle-earth, where bold and valiant heroes stand firm against the greatest terrors and evils their world has ever faced—and triumph.

And now you can join them! *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* core rulebook is your ticket to wondrous adventures within the realms of Middle-earth. With it, you can create your own characters—warriors and wizards, Elves and Dwarves, and more—and take them on quests that pit them against the servants of Sauron and other evils that imperil the West.

* * *

WHAT IS ROLEPLAYING?

This is a *roleplaying game*. It's different from card games, board games, video games, and most other kinds of games. When you play a roleplaying game, your objective isn't to 'win.' Instead, your goal is to have fun with your friends by telling a fantasy story in which characters you have created accomplish noble and heroic deeds: saving the world from the Dark Lord, rescuing a group of Dwarves trapped in Moria, or slaying a dragon. It's like playing make-believe when you were younger, except that you don't run around outside and there are rules to tell you if you hit the orc and killed it.

To play *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*, you need a *character*: a fictional persona you create, define, and develop through play. Your character might be a gregarious Dwarf from Erebor, a Ranger from Eriador, a noble of Gondor, a corsair from Umbar, or any one of thousands of other fascinating possibilities. The rules of the game explain how to create your character: how to define his basic qualities, what he knows how to do, the special powers and abilities he has, and the weapons and gear he carries with him.

But that's just part of the process. *You*, not the rules, define what your character is like. Is he light-hearted and merry? A complainer who's secretly kind-hearted and noble? Courageous and belligerent? Valorous and self-sacrificing? Only you decide.

You also get to choose how your character acts during the game. Characters controlled by a single player are known as *player characters* (PCs).

One member of your group is the *Narrator*, the person in charge of creating the outline of an adventure for your characters to take part in. She explains the situations and plays the parts of all the *non-player characters* (NPCs), anyone in the story that another player doesn't control. She describes to you what your character sees, or what happens in the adventure.

But because roleplaying games involve creating engaging stories *as a group*, you don't just listen as the Narrator says, 'Three Orcs rush at you with drawn swords!' *You* get to choose exactly what your character does. You might say, 'I draw my blade and prepare for battle!' Or, 'I jump behind those rocks to get some cover and call for help!' Or, 'I bellow, "Flee now, spawn of Saruman, or I will destroy you all!"'

Once you make that choice, you use the rules to find out what happens. By rolling dice and applying the rules, you can determine whether you strike the Orcs with your sword, how much cover the rocks provide, or whether your attempt to frighten the Orcs succeeds. If necessary, the Narrator interprets the rules for you, deciding how they apply to a particular situation.

The rules are what make this a game: they govern how certain things work. But it's unlike other games because the rules are flexible. If you want to or need to, you can even change or ignore them altogether. The whole point is to have fun by accomplishing goals within an adventure and, in the process, by creating a story.

The Narrator doesn't just tell you a story all by herself. Instead, you, she, and your other friends compose the story as you go, by describing your characters' actions and using the rules to determine what happens. The story turns out differently if you attack the Orcs, hide from them, or try to frighten them. Thus, through your decisions, you contribute to and guide the course of the story.

You can think of a roleplaying game session as improvisational radio theatre. It's improvisational because although the Narrator has a 'script' (her notes and ideas for what's likely to happen during the adventure), everyone else can contribute to it or 'rewrite' it during the course of the game. It's like radio because you're not wearing costumes, using props, or actually moving around and acting out scenes. Instead, you sit at a table and imagine what's happening. And it's theatre because you're creating a dramatic story.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY THIS GAME

Besides this book, you need a few things to play *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*. Fortunately, they're things you likely have.

First, you need paper and pencils. You use these to write down information about your characters, jot notes during the game, and so forth.

Second, you need dice: the cube-shaped, six-sided dice found in most boardgames. At a minimum, each player should have two dice. The Narrator needs four.

Third, and most important, you need other people to play with. *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* requires at least two people: one to be the Narrator, plus one player. Most people, though, enjoy roleplaying games best when at least three or four players take part in each game session.

IF YOU'VE PLAYED THE LORD OF THE RINGS ROLEPLAYING ADVENTURE GAME

You may have gotten a taste of roleplaying already through Decipher's *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Adventure Game*. In the *Adventure Game*, you played the part of a member of the Fellowship of the Ring as you journeyed through the dark and dangerous halls of Moria. You got to step into the shoes of the character you were playing, acting out his part based on what you've read in *The Lord of the Rings* or seen in *The Fellowship of the Ring* film.

Now that you have the full-fledged *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*, it's time to expand your horizons a bit. This game differs from the *Adventure Game* in two important ways.

First and foremost, you get to create your own character here. You are not limited to playing Aragorn, Sam, or so on any longer. Now it's your turn to exercise your creativity and make up an adventurer of your own to play.

Think about it a little bit. Have you ever wondered what it would be like if there was an aggressive Hobbit trained as a mighty warrior? Or a Dwarf who could cast spells and draw mystic runes? Well, this is your chance to find out! With *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*, you can create all those characters—and thousands more—and roleplay them through their own adventures in Middle-earth. The only limit is your imagination.

Second, the adventures you play through in this game aren't as rigidly defined as the one in the *Adventure Game*. The Narrator can make up any sort of adventure she likes and take you anywhere in Middle-earth as a part of it. And you can decide to do whatever you want. The possibilities are truly endless. Rather than having to simply choose between 'attack the Orcs' or 'run away,' now you can try anything else you can think of: trick or outwit your opponents, cause disasters to befall them, or even somehow avoid them altogether. Again, the only limits are your imagination—and, sometimes, the rules.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is divided into four sections: information about Middle-earth, character creation, the CODA SYSTEM rules, and information for the Narrator.

The first chapter describes the history of Middle-earth and its lands and realms as of the late Third Age, the time depicted in *The Lord of the Rings*. It provides all the basic information you need to know to establish a context for where your characters are from and what they're doing.

The second section, Chapters Two through Eight, provides the rules and guidelines you need to create your character. Chapters Two through Six cover attributes, races, orders, skills, and traits, respectively, while Chapter Seven delves into the mysteries and wonders of magic in Middle-earth. Chapter Eight describes the weapons, armour, and other gear characters use in their battles against the Shadow. To guide you and give you some examples of how everything works, these chapters feature a running example depicting how two players, Christian and John, create their characters: Menelcar, a warrior from Gondor; and Grór, a dwarf warrior.

You can also find a complete set of character archetypes on pages 38-43. These come ready for you to play right away. Just pick an archetype, give it a name, and you are ready to get started.

The third section of the book consists of only one chapter, Chapter Nine. It contains the complete CODA SYSTEM rules for this game. These rules tell you how to accomplish tasks, fight Orcs, travel great distances, and resist the terrors of the Nazgûl. If you ever have a question about the basic rules, this is the first place to look for the answer.

The final section of the book, Chapters Ten through Twelve, is primarily for the Narrator: the member of your gaming group who plans and 'runs' the games. The first two chapters include general advice on how to create an epic fantasy chronicle in Middle-earth: what elements are important to the game, how to construct a long-running story, and so forth. Chapter Twelve provides more concrete information: game statistics for enemies like Orcs, wolves, and giant spiders, and for weapons and armour. Here, the Narrator can find just about everything she needs to make her game run more smoothly and easily.

THE ROAD GOES EVER ON

And there's more information where that came from! Not only does Decipher plan to release many supplements for this game—new books detailing races, places, and things for your game—but it maintains an active website at **www.decipher.com**. There you can find free downloads, discussion boards, and plenty of other information about this and Decipher's other great games, including *The Lord of the Rings Trading Card Game*. You can ask questions and even chat with the games' authors and designers if you want to. So come by and join the active *The Lord of the Rings* gaming community!

GLOSSARY

The following terms appear throughout *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*. If you have trouble remembering what a particular term means, you can look it up here. For more details, consult the index at the back of this book.

ACADEMIC TEST: A test involving a character's knowledge, such as which Orcs have a death's-head moon badge, who Elendil's sons were, or the name of the King of Rohan. Academic modifiers may affect these tests.

ACTION: When your character does something, that's an action. Every character can take two actions per round.

ADVANCEMENT: Characters develop and improve over time as they learn from their experiences—both good and bad. When a character earns a certain amount of experience points, he advances, gaining the opportunity to improve attributes and skills or acquire new skills and abilities.

ATTRIBUTE: One of six innate character qualities: Bearing (Brg), Nimbleness (Nim), Perception (Per), Strength (Str), Vitality (Vit), and Wits (Wit).

ATTRIBUTE TEST: A test made when your character's innate qualities play an important role, such as lifting a heavy object or jumping across slippery rocks. Only your attribute modifier applies to these tests.

BONUS: A positive modifier to a dice roll.

CHAPTER: One complete *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* adventure, much like a chapter in a book. A chapter may require several game sessions to complete.

CHRONICLE: A related collection of chapters (stories) featuring the same characters as the protagonists.

CORRUPTION: A measure of a character's inclination toward selfishness, evil, and the Shadow. If a PC accumulates Corruption equal to or greater than his Bearing, he becomes an NPC.

CODA SYSTEM: The set of rules described in this book and used to play *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*.

COURAGE: This represents your character's bravery, heroic qualities, and ingenuity. You use Courage to improve test results, gaining a +3 bonus per Courage point spent.

DICE ROLL: A roll of the dice, made whenever there is a chance your character could fail at an action.

DIFFICULTY: The level of challenge associated with a test, established by a Target Number (TN). This ranges from 5 (easy) to 25 or more (nearly impossible).

EDGE: A trait that gives your character an advantage.

ELITE ORDER: An advanced, specialized order (see below) that characters can belong to if they meet the qualifications.

EXPERIENCE POINTS: A numerical measure of your character's achievement. You receive experience points at the end of each chapter based on your PC's actions and success.

EXTENDED ACTION: An action requiring all of a character's attention for a lengthy time, such as walking on a rope bridge across a river, crafting a sword, or fixing a torn mail-shirt.

FLAW: A trait that hinders your character.

FREE ACTION: An action that requires little time or effort, such as calling out for help or dropping your weapon. It does not cost any actions to perform.

FULL-ROUND ACTION: An action requiring a character's full attention, such as healing an injured comrade.

HEALTH: A measure of a character's health and fitness. A character's Health equals his Vitality plus his Strength modifier. This determines how many Wound Points of damage he can sustain in each Wound Level.

IMPROVEMENT: Characters can improve some traits and abilities by spending advancement picks to acquire them more than once. Unless the description of a trait or ability specifically says it can be improved, your character can acquire it only once.

INITIATIVE TEST: A Swiftness reaction test that determines the order in which characters act in a combat encounter.

MODIFIER: A bonus or penalty applied to a test result.

MOVE ACTION: This action allows you to move a certain distance, depending on whether you run, walk, crawl, climb, or swim.

NARRATOR: The player who portrays the non-player characters (NPCs), makes up the episode for the game, and serves as the referee.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTER (NPC): Any character other than a player character. The Narrator plays the part of all NPCs.

NON-ORDER SKILL: A skill a character possesses that is unrelated to his order.

ORDER: A character's vocation in the game: barbarian, craftsman, loremaster, magician, mariner, minstrel, noble, rogue, or warrior.

ORDER ABILITY: A special ability, power, or talent a character derives from his order.

ORDER SKILL: A skill a character gains by virtue of his order.

PENALTY: A negative modifier to a dice roll.

PHYSICAL TEST: A test involving a physical action, such as shooting an arrow, mending a broken sword, or scanning the horizon for enemies. Physical modifiers apply to these tests.

PLAYER CHARACTER (PC): A character that a player controls, usually one of the main protagonists of the chapter or chronicle.

RACE: Your character's race: Dwarf, Elf, Hobbit, or Man.

RACIAL ABILITY: A special ability, power, or talent a character derives from his race.

REACTION: One of four character qualities used for reaction tests: Stamina, Swiftness, Willpower, and Wisdom.

REACTION TEST: A test made in reaction to something, such as to avoid falling rocks, to dodge a sword blow, or to resist exposure to Orc-poison. The appropriate reaction modifier applies to these tests.

RENOWN: A measure of a character's fame or infamy. Used to determine whether or not other people recognize the character, Renown also modifies certain social tests.

ROUND: A six-second measure of time during combat or other encounters in which timing is critical.

SCENE: A single encounter between characters, or a single event. This is similar to a scene in a book or television show.

SKILL: A character's learned abilities, aptitudes, and areas of knowledge.

SKILL TEST: A test influenced by a character's training, such as repairing damaged armour or tracking a band of Orcs. Both attribute modifiers and skill ranks affect skill tests.

SOCIAL TEST: A test involving interaction between two characters, such as bargaining for a lower price or mediating a dispute. Social modifiers apply to these tests.

SORCERY: Dark, evil magic, rarely learned or used by PCs because of its corrupting effects.

SPECIALTY: A character's field of expertise within a skill, the aspect of the skill at which he's the most trained or accomplished. Characters add +2 to skill test results when using their specialties.

STAMINA: A type of reaction that represents your toughness and hardiness. Used to resist some forms of injury, and to determine your ability to heal damage.

SWIFTNESS: A type of reaction that represents your reflexes. Used to determine initiative, to dodge attacks, and to avoid surprise.

TARGET NUMBER: The number a player must meet or beat to succeed in a test.

TEST: A dice roll used to determine the results of an action for which the outcome is uncertain. Most tests involve rolling 2d6 and adding the numbers together, then applying any appropriate modifiers (attribute modifiers, skill levels, and so forth).

TEST RESULT: The sum total of the dice result after you apply all modifiers.

TRAINED: Having at least one rank in a skill, such as Armed Combat +1, means a character is 'trained' in that skill.

TRAIT: An aspect of your character not measured by attributes, reactions, skills, or order abilities, such as keen eyesight, greediness, or the ability to withstand more damage. Traits can be either edges or flaws.

UNTRAINED: A character with no ranks in a skill is untrained in that area. Some skills can't be used without training. If called upon to make a test using such a skill, an untrained character cannot comply. Characters can use other skills untrained, however. When called upon to make such skill tests, they simply add 0 (their effective rank) to the dice result.

WEARINESS: A measure of how rested or tired a character is. There are six Weariness Levels: Hale, Winded, Tired, Weary, Spent, and Exhausted.

WILLPOWER: A type of reaction that represents your strength of will and guts. Used to resist mind control, torture, and some kinds of social tests, and to push yourself beyond your limits.

WISDOM: A type of reaction that represents your common sense and shrewdness. Used to resist attempts to persuade or bluff you.

WOUND LEVEL: A measure of how wounded a character is. There are six Wound Levels: Healthy, Dazed, Injured, Wounded, Incapacitated, and Near Death. Within each level, a character can withstand an amount of damage equal to his Health.

WOUND POINTS: These measure how much physical damage your character can withstand before dropping to the next lowest Wound Level. A character's Wound Points in each Wound Level are equal to his Health.

Chapter One

THERE AND BACK AGAIN

> '"I have crossed many mountains and many rivers, and trodden many plains, even into the far countries of Rhûn and Harad where the stars are strange."'
>
> — Aragorn,
> The Fellowship of the Ring

From the deserts and jungles of farthest Harad to the icy wastes of Forodwaith, from the Sea in the West, across the Misty Mountains, to the plains and lakes of the East, Middle-earth is a world of wondrous lands, proud kingdoms, deadly peaks, and dark forests. Within its bounds adventurers can find places of ease and rest, lairs of fell beasts and monsters most foul, and caverns filled with cruel Orcs. Every day of travel or work may bring excitement—and danger.

◆

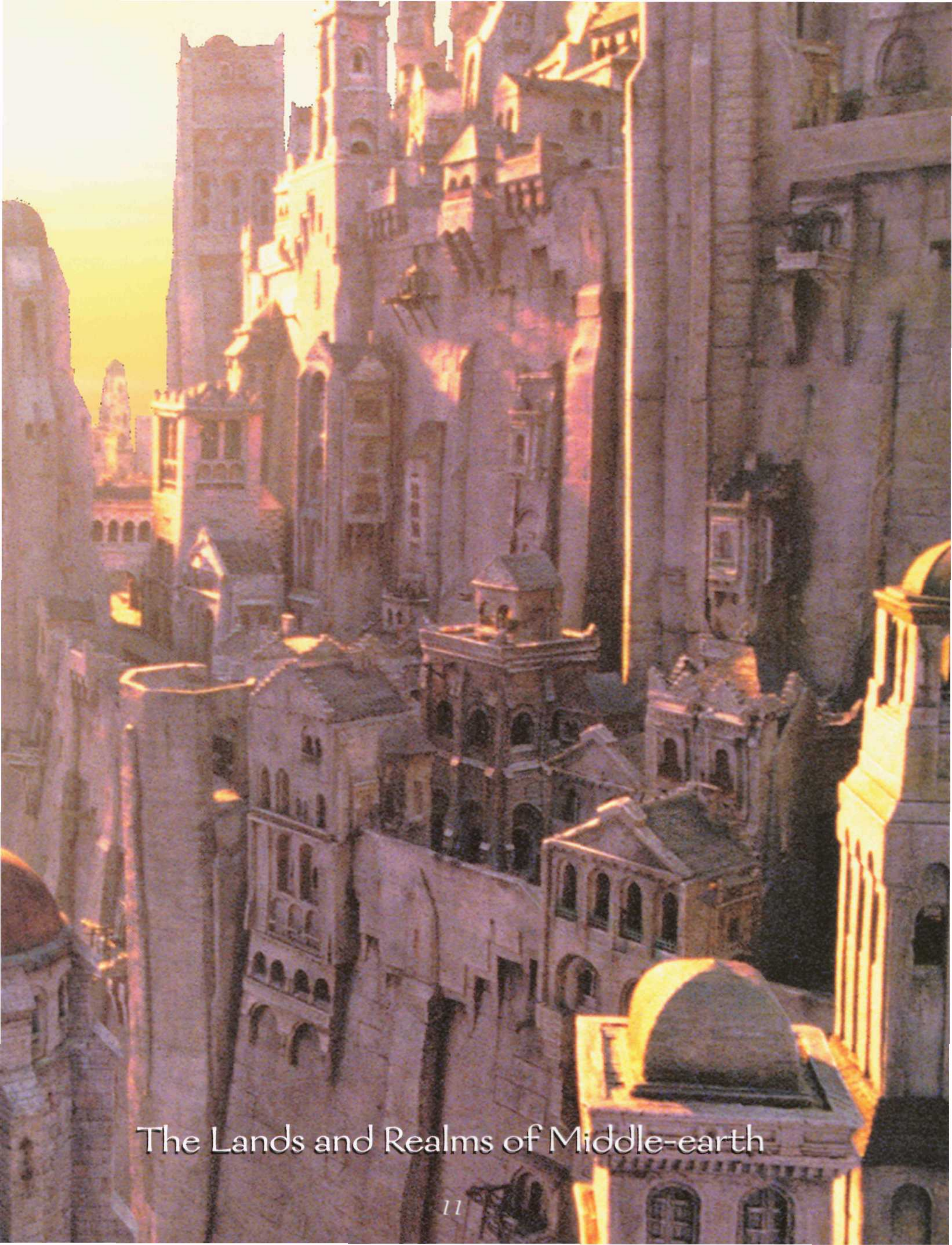
ERIADOR

Westernmost of the regions of Middle-earth, Eriador is a land filled with forests, hills, and fields. Its climate tends to be cool and at times rainy, though heavy snows occur only near mountainous areas.

Home to Hobbits, Elves, Dwarves, and Men, as well as many other, stranger creatures, Eriador is largely depopulated by the time of the late Third Age, with broad stretches of wild and empty lands between the towns and settled areas. In the Fourth Age, after the establishment of the Reunited Kingdom, people and prosperity fill it once more. Of the Five Wizards, Gandalf the Grey (afterwards Gandalf the White) spent the most time in Eriador and did what he could to protect its people during the last two millennia of the Third Age.

LINDON

The last remnant of the sunken continent of Beleriand to remain above the waves, Lindon is a green and pleasant land on the westernmost verge of Middle-earth. Divided by the Gulf of Lhûn into Forlindon (to the



The Lands and Realms of Middle-earth

north) and Harlindon (to the south), it was Gil-galad's kingdom throughout the Second Age, and home to most of the Noldor remaining in Middle-earth. Depopulated by losses during the Wars of the Elves and Sauron and the Last Alliance during the Second Age, the kingdom lapsed after the death of Gil-galad (when the kingship also fell into abeyance). However, many Wandering Companies of Elves still considered Lindon their home throughout the Third Age.

With the exception of the Havens and the three White Towers, Lindon contains no cities or visible dwellings, but there are many hidden halls and secret retreats, visible only to those who know how to find them. Save for the Dwarves of the Blue Mountains, only Elves dwell in Lindon. Others who pass through find its silences and emptiness uncanny. A lightly forested land, it has many grassy regions along the coasts, and scrub or heather where the foothills rise into mountains. It is said that no part of Lindon lies outside the sound and smell of the Sea, at least to Elven-senses. After the greater part of its people depart at the beginning of the Fourth Age, it becomes even more than before an empty, silent land, home only to birds and beasts.

THE HALLS OF THE DWARVES

Lindon's chief feature is the Blue Mountains (Ered Luin), a range running north-south, bending somewhat to the east in Harlindon and ending near the Brandywine River. Though not so tall and sharp as the Misty Mountains, the oft-forested peaks of the Ered Luin form a barrier that separates the rest of Lindon from Eriador proper. The cataclysm that ended the First Age created the Gulf of Lhûn, which splits the Blue Mountains in twain.

Since the First Age, these mountains have been home to Dwarves. Once they contained the great Dwarf-halls of Nogrod and Belegost, like unto Khazad-dûm in their splendour, but those noble mansions were destroyed in the breaking of Thangorodrim. Some of the survivors fled to other Dwarf-realms, but many stayed and established new homes on the east side of the mountains, especially to the north of the Great East Road. Thousands of years later, when Durin's Folk abandoned Khazad-dûm, many of them settled here. Durin's royal house joined them when the dragon Smaug destroyed Erebor.

Even in the dark days at the end of the Third Age, these Dwarf-communities still thrive, with much coming and going of goods and supplies. They trade both with their kinsmen in the east and north, and with the Men of Eriador. In the early Fourth Age, the Dwarves of the Blue Mountains establish alliances with the Reunited Kingdom and busy themselves with King Elessar's rebuilding program.

THE GREY HAVENS (MITHLOND)

The land immediately surrounding the Gulf of Lhûn contains Lindon's only city, Mithlond. Better known as the Grey Havens, this place is located at the mouth of the River Lhûn (Blue River). The Elven shipwrights and mariners here build ships capable of sailing the Lost Road to Elvenhome in the Undying West, and it is to here that all Elves who have at last grown weary of Middle-earth make their pilgrimage and then depart. Throughout the Second and Third Ages, the Havens were the dwelling-place of Círdan the Shipwright, an Elf of great nobility and power who once possessed Narya, the Ring of Fire, but gave it to Gandalf.

After Círdan's departure at the beginning of the Fourth Age, some of his shipwrights remain and continue to practice their ancient craft of preparing ships for those few Elves who have yet to depart. Visitors who come expecting a bustling port city, however, are surprised by the quiet and calm of the Havens, a place for Elven pilgrims to rest and prepare for the coming voyage. Mithlond is more like Rivendell than a fishing-town of Men.

THE WHITE TOWERS

The Tower Hills (Emyn Beraid) just east of the Grey Havens take their name from the three tall White Towers that dot their crests. These are not Elven-towers, but outposts of the Lost Kingdom of Arnor. The westernmost of them held the seventh and most prized of all the *palantíri*, the one possessing the power to look across the Sea. After the passing of the North-kingdom, the Elves of Lindon took the White Towers into their keeping and guarded the stone until the end of the Third Age, when it was carried West by Círdan. Thereafter King Elessar took the ancient towers back into the Kingdom of Arnor, and they once again became dwellings of the Dúnedain.

THE LOST REALM OF ARNOR

Once covering virtually all of Eriador, Arnor was the elder of the two Númenórean kingdoms in exile. Elendil himself ruled it from the city of Annúminas (Tower of the West) on Lake Evendim. At its height, Arnor stretched from the Blue Mountains in the west to the foothills of the Misty Mountains in the east, and from the Ice Bay of Forochel in the north to the river Isen in the south. However, some smaller regions within those borders stood apart, just as the Shire did in the Third Age. For example, the Old

Forest was never truly owned by any kingdom, although it lay within Arnor's borders, and later those of Cardolan. Likewise Rivendell, while on Arnor's eastern border, was never considered part of that kingdom, but a realm apart.

Despite being further removed from the peril of Mordor and constant invasion from the east and south, Arnor did not thrive as Gondor did. The massacre of its soldiers in the disaster of the Gladden Fields, as they returned from the battles that ended the Second Age, began a slow waning of the Dúnedain of the North.

Midway through its history, problems of succession caused Arnor to be divided into three sister kingdoms: Arthedain, Cardolan, and Rhudaur. Subsequent wars between them, a disastrous plague, and invasion from the north hastened the Dúnedain's decline.

ARTHEDAIN

Of the three realms of Arnor, Arthedain most carried on the traditions of the elder kingdom, as its king retained the heirlooms of the House of Isildur—the three *palantíri* of the north, the Ring of Barahir, the Sceptre of Annúminas, and the Elfstone—as well as control over the fortress atop Amon Sûl (Weathertop). Its capital was moved from Annúminas in the west, which fell into ruin, to Fornost Erain ('Norbury of the Kings') to the south of the North Downs. Arthedain also maintained the Great East Road that ran from the Grey Havens, past Rivendell, and over the mountains into Wilderland. It also tended the North Road from Fornost as far as Bree.

Arthedain encompassed a wide variety of terrain, from rugged hills and desolate moors to well-watered farmlands, fertile river valleys, and meandering grassy downs. It was home not just to the Dúnedain but also to the Bree-folk and, later, to the Hobbits. In addition, many Wandering Companies of Elves travelled through it often, and Dwarves were a common sight on the Great East Road. Until the splitting of the kingdom, and again after the destruction of Angmar, these lands were probably the most peaceful in Middle-earth at most times.

By the time of the War of the Ring, what had once been Fornost Erain was reduced to overgrown mounds with a few old ruins poking up through the grass. Known as Deadmen's Dike, it was shunned by all but the Rangers, and the old road leading to it was so overgrown from disuse that it was called the Greenway. Many fell and dangerous beasts lurked in the lands around it.

With the restoration of Arnor early in the Fourth Age, Fornost Erain is rebuilt and again becomes the capital of the Dúnedain of the North and the chief city of all Eriador, home to Elessar and Arwen's court (which alternates every decade or so between Minas Tirith and Fornost). The Greenway is repaired and again becomes much travelled,

abandoned inns along the Great East Road east of Bree are restored, and many of the desolate lands between Bree, Fornost Erain, and the Brandywine are again brought under cultivation.

CARDOLAN

After the division of Arnor, the southern third of the old kingdom became known as Cardolan. Most of Cardolan's people lived between the Greyflood and the Brandywine, including the fertile lands known as Minhiriath ('[Land] Between the Rivers'). More people lived near the Greyflood than the Brandywine, the mouth of the latter being overlooked by hills on one side and the Eryn Vorn ('Black Wood') on the other. Their chief cities, Lond Daer and Tharbad, sat along the Greyflood. Lond Daer was a great port where the river flowed into the sea. Tharbad was an important waystation for overland travel between the North and Gondor.

Since it was so thickly settled, Cardolan suffered much during the war with Angmar, which concluded in a heroic but unsuccessful last stand on their northern border in the Tyrn Gorthad ('Barrow-downs'), the hills containing burial mounds, located west of the South Downs. The Great Plague killed most of the surviving commoners and all of the Dúnedain there two centuries later. Those few who remained later intermarried with the various Middle Men who had formerly been subject to them, kinsmen of the Bree-folk and Dunlendings. The barrows themselves indicate that this process had begun much earlier, as the princes of Cardolan must have adopted this burial custom from pre-Númenórean inhabitants, it being contrary to Dúnadan custom.

Thereafter, the areas that had once been Cardolan devolved into scattered, isolated communities. By the end of the Third Age, Minhiriath was largely empty, and even Tharbad was a deserted ruin, the Great Bridge here having collapsed to form a ford of stony rubble.

With the restoration of the North-kingdom early in the Fourth Age, Tharbad once again becomes an important stop on the road between Arnor and Gondor. With the help of the Dwarves, King Elessar rebuilds the Great Bridge and the town, though the rest of Cardolan remains only lightly settled for long years thereafter.

RHUDAUR

Rhudaur consisted of the eastern third of Arnor, particularly the region between the Weather Hills, the Ettenmoors, and the Trollshaws. This land is higher in elevation than that further west or south, good for pasture but poor for farming, and the folk of Rhudaur soon came to envy the fertile valleys and plentiful farmland of their sister realms. The Dúnedain here mingled with the Hill-men who first settled these lands, a dour folk accustomed to hostility from every side. Within a few centuries, these Dúnedain were completely absorbed by their more numerous neighbours.

When Angmar rose in the north, the folk of Rhudaur became its staunchest allies. They helped destroy Cardolan and Arthedain before being devoured and turned into a mere province of Angmar. What little remained of Rhudaur was destroyed in the battles that overthrew Angmar. The region remained a wasteland thereafter, occupied only by roving bands of outlaws.

The folk of Rhudaur lived in hill-forts instead of cities. Some of these evolved into fortresses and castles, while others remained simple enclosures on high ground where low earthen walls protected flock and folk alike. All these were ruins by the end of the Third Age, and some had become Troll-lairs, home to bands of wolf's-heads or the like.

The area remains largely uninhabited, except along the Great East Road, well into the Fourth Age. This is due to the nearness of Orcs in the mountains, Giants in the Ettenmoors, and Trolls in the Trollshaws.

THE SHIRE

'The Shire was divided into four quarters . . . and these again each into a number of folklands, which still bore the names of some of the old leading families[.]'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

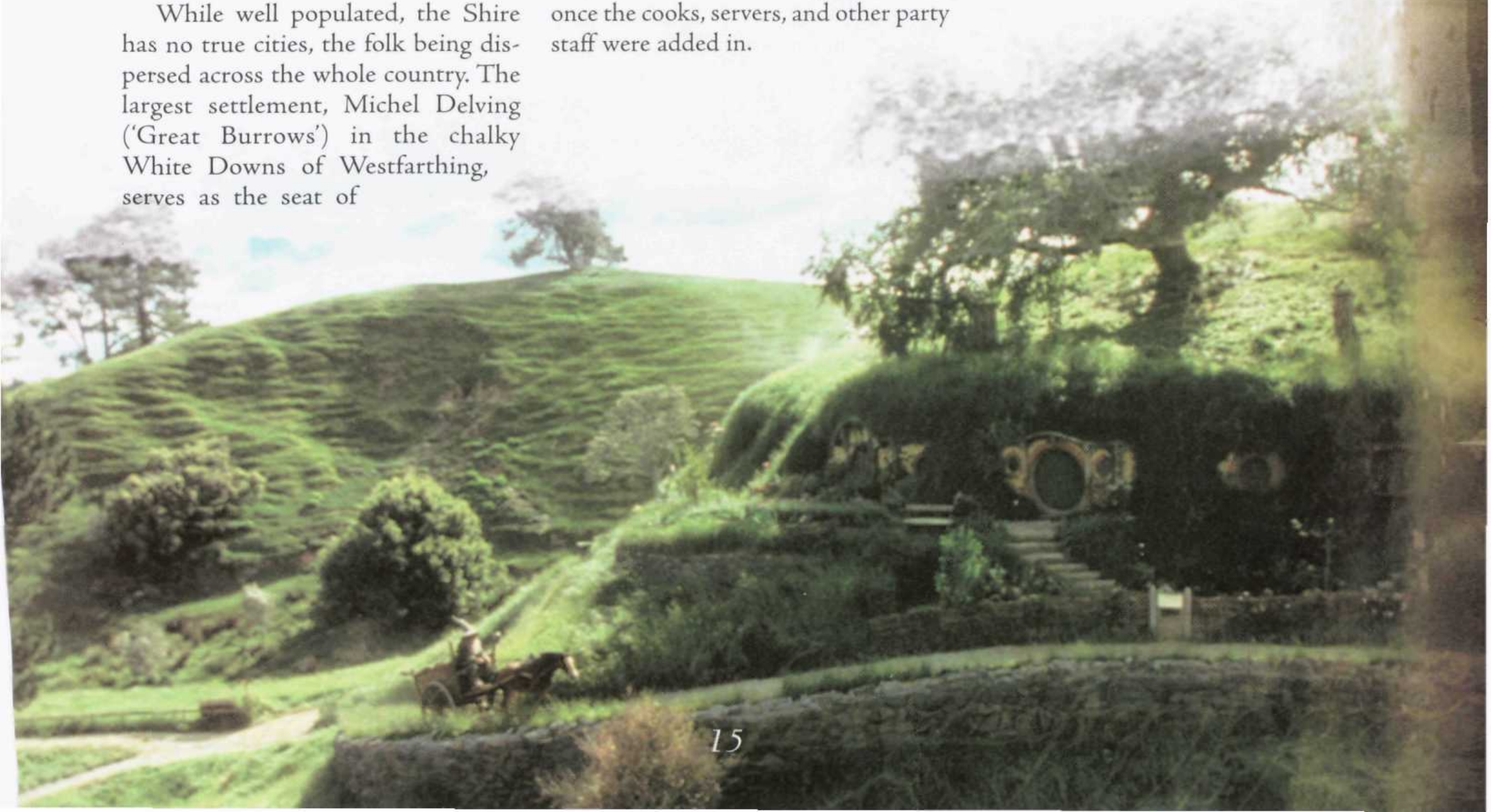
The Shire is a pleasant, peaceful land about 120 miles long (west to east) and 150 miles wide (north to south). Divided into four quarters, or farthings—Northfarthing, Eastfarthing, Southfarthing, and Westfarthing—it is a densely settled land of fields, farmlands, woods, streams, and villages. For the last 1,500 years, it has been the homeland of most of the Hobbits. The original settlement was a land-grant from one of the last kings of Arthedain to refugees entering Eriador from Wilderland. It was later expanded through the addition of Buckland to the east, a narrow strip along the far shore of the Brandywine some 20 miles long but only about seven miles wide.

While well populated, the Shire has no true cities, the folk being dispersed across the whole country. The largest settlement, Michel Delving ('Great Burrows') in the chalky White Downs of Westfarthing, serves as the seat of what government the Hobbits have. It houses the home of the Mayor as well as the headquarters of the Shirriffs, the Bounders, and the Post. Michel Delving also includes the Mathom House (the Shire museum) and is the site of the Free Fair (a septennial event). A town of some size, it is unusual for the Shire in that, extensive as the namesake delvings are, a large portion of the town is aboveground.

Most of the other large population centres owe their numbers to being the home of a large and prosperous extended family, such as the Great Smials at Tuckborough. The Tooks live in Great Smials, while Tuckborough itself is largely populated by servants and workmen employed by or dependent in some way upon them. Similarly Brandy Hall in Buckland is the home of the Brandybuck clan, with the rest of Buckland serving as home to their friends, followers, retainers, and more distant relations. Most of the villages that dot the landscape are home to only one or two hundred Hobbits. Bilbo's grand birthday party, with its 144 invited guests, included virtually everybody in the nearby village of Hobbiton and the neighbourhood once the cooks, servers, and other party staff were added in.

For such a small country, the Shire has a great variety of terrains: hills, river valleys, bogs, woodlands (thickening to forest toward the northern border), marshes, moors, and open downs. Aside from its unique native architecture, few other points are of interest to a stranger passing through, except perhaps the Three-Farthing Stone, near the centre of the Shire, just southeast of Bywater.

Early in the Fourth Age, King Elessar declares the Shire off-limits to Men. A second expansion, Westmarch, is added a generation after the War of the Ring (one of the original pioneers being Sam Gamgee's oldest daughter), extending the western border of the Hobbits' lands from the Far Downs to the Tower Hills. The Shire prospered greatly during the Fourth Age, not just sharing in the general improvement of conditions the rest of Eriador experienced with the renewal of the North-kingdom, but also establishing new ties with other realms as the result of friendships that grew up during the Quest of Erebor and the War of the Ring.



THE OLD FOREST

' "But the Forest is queer . . . And the trees do not like strangers. They watch you." '
— Merry, The Fellowship of the Ring

Tiny by the standards of Middle-earth's great forests like Fangorn, Lothlórien, and Mirkwood, the Old Forest nevertheless deserves respect because of its primeval nature. The trees here are very like the first trees in the first forest before Elves or Men ever came into the world. The magic of the land is strong here. Old, dark trees with twisted hearts, like Old Man Willow, can sometimes cast enchantments, subtly move to force travellers away from their chosen route, or work other evils.

Fortunately, those who stray within the Old Forest have at least one protector: the jolly Tom Bombadil, a mysterious being known as Iarwain Ben-adar to the Elves, Orald to the Men of the North, and Forn to Durin's Folk. Tom possesses powerful (if subtle) magic, and so does his wife, Goldberry, daughter of the River-woman of the Withywindle.

Bombadil is a strange fellow. Too tall and heavy to be a Hobbit, but too short to be a Man, he wears a blue coat, a battered hat with a tall crown and a long, blue feather, and yellow boots, and he sings often and loudly. Within his 'realm,' Tom has great power. Not even the One Ring can affect or dismay him. Outside of his lands, he does not go.

THE BARROW-DOWNS

Not actually in the Old Forest, but on its eastern border sit the Barrow-downs ('Tyrn Gorthad'), a range of treeless hills topped with burial mounds and a scattering of standing stones and stone circles. Some of these date to the First Age. The ancestors of the Bree-men created them, just as their distant kinsmen, the Dead Men of Dunharrow, created the Púkel-men and the Paths of the Dead in the White Mountains. Others, created later, date from the time of the kings and princes of the Dúnedain.

The Downs have been very dangerous since the mid-Third Age, when Angmar overran the land and the Witch-king sent evil spirits to inhabit the barrows. The area has been haunted ever since, with unwary travellers lured off to their doom. See pages 294-5 for more information on the Barrow-wights who live there.

BREE-LAND

This tiny realm is simply an informal confederation of several villages—Bree, Staddle, Combe, and Archet—with no king or lord to rule them. As neighbours, the Breelanders work together to keep the Road in repair and muster defence in times of trouble.

Two races jointly occupy Bree-land: Men and Hobbits. The Bree-men are one of the last remnants of the original Men who inhabited Eriador. The Dunlendings, from whom they have been separated for centuries but with whom they still maintain trade up and down the North Road, are their closest kin. The Hobbit-folk of Bree are later arrivals. Bree is the oldest surviving Hobbit settlement in Middle-earth. The Hobbit presence here dates back to not long after they crossed the mountains west from Wilderland. It was from Bree-land that, 300 years later, the hobbits colonizing the Shire set out.

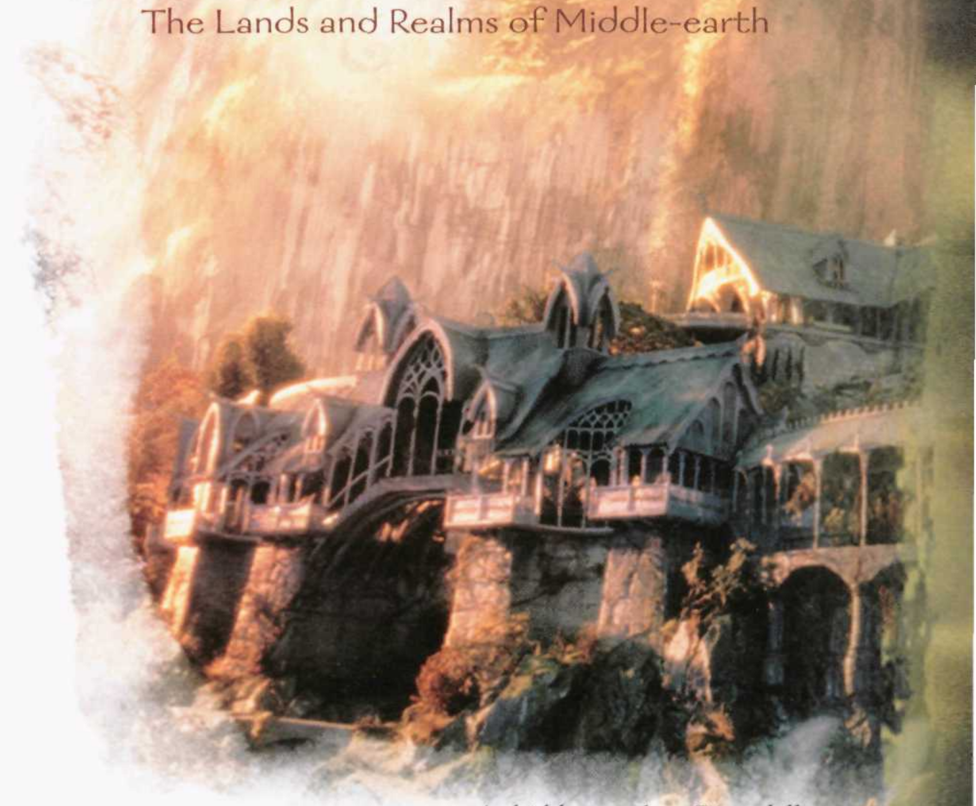
BREE

> *'The village of Bree had some hundred stone houses of the Big Folk, mostly above the Road, nestling on the hillside with windows looking west.'*
>
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

Located at the crossing of the North Road (the Greenway) from Tharbad to Fornost Erain and the Great East Road from Mithlond to the Misty Mountains, Bree is built up against Bree Hill. It contains about a hundred houses of Men, built of sturdy stone, and somewhat fewer Hobbit-dwellings often dug directly into the Hill itself. A stout hedge-wall and a dike, with one gate on each side for the Great East Road, protects it from peril.

Once an important place during the days of the North-kingdom, Bree declined into a sleepy small town by the end of the Third Age. At that time, it was best known to travellers as the site of the Prancing Pony Inn, run by the inestimable Barliman Butterbur and featuring some of the best food and beer between the Mountains and the Sea. In the early Fourth Age, with the renewal of the Kingdom of Arnor and the refounding of Fornost Erain as King Elessar's northern capital, Bree once again flourishes.

The Prancing Pony



RIVENDELL (IMLADRIS)

Founded by Elrond late in the Second Age, Imladris, also known as Rivendell and the Last Homely House, is a refuge for Elves and Elf-friends. Established after the fall of Eregion, it became home to the few surviving Elven-smiths who still knew something of the lore of Fëanor and Celebrimbor. These same smiths reforged the shards of Elendil's sword for Aragorn at the start of the War of the Ring.

After Gil-galad perished and his kingdom faded away, Rivendell became a welcome stop for Wandering Companies of Elves who no longer had any permanent dwelling. Many Elves from Mirkwood or further east who had decided to heed the Sea-call stopped at Rivendell on their way to the Havens to remember their past in Middle-earth and learn more of what awaited them beyond the Sea.

After the destruction of the North-kingdom, Elrond welcomed the heirs of Isildur and their kin into his house and acted as a foster father to each Chieftain of the Dúnedain in turn. As descendants of his brother Elros, they were his distant kin.

A hidden realm, Rivendell was very hard to find except by those Elrond wished to find it. This protection was in part physical—for it was built within a deep valley—and in part a function of Elrond's magical powers. Quite small as 'realms' go, it consists of the great main house with its outlying wings containing libraries, feast-halls, and sleeping rooms, plus a few outbuildings, terraces, and groves. But its power and importance are not to be measured by mere size. There were few spots in Middle-earth where so many of the Wise so often gathered together, or which openly welcomed all Elf-friends and allies of the West. In addition, Rivendell is a place of great lore. The scrolls, books, and living memories there can speak of much that once existed in Middle-earth: the history of the First and Second Ages, the lore behind the deeds of the War of the Ring, and much else.

In the Fourth Age, after Elrond's departure over the Sea, his sons, Elladan and Elrohir, remain in Imladris for a time and maintain it as a refuge, a hostelry, and a house of lore. They keep up close ties with their sister the Queen, their grandfather Celeborn of Lórien, and their kinsman Elessar.

EREGION (HOLLIN)

> *'"We have reached the borders of the country that Men call Hollin; many Elves lived here in happier days, when Eregion was its name."'*
> — *Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring*

An Elven-realm founded early in the Second Age by Celebrimbor, grandson of Fëanor, Eregion was home to many of those Noldor who survived the terrible struggle against Thangorodrim in Beleriand during the First Age. They moved from Lindon to be near their friends, the Dwarves of Moria (Khazad-dûm). With them, they had the greatest friendship that had ever yet grown up between Dwarves and Elves, a partnership that greatly benefited both peoples.

Unfortunately, the desire of this people for lore and power led to their doom. They accepted the help of Sauron, not knowing him for who he really was. With his aid, they forged the Rings of Power, all of which—save the Three—the Dark Lord took control of by crafting the One Ring. Eregion was destroyed—and Celebrimbor and many of its other Elves slain—during the War of the Elves and Sauron. The few survivors, rescued by Elrond, lived in Rivendell thereafter.

Eregion, or Hollin as Men call it, is a high plateau, with the land rising steadily into the mountains. A rocky, windy highland of bare stone, stubborn grasses, and many holly trees (from which it takes its name), it contains many ruins: the homes and forges of the vanished Elven-smiths, now reduced to half-buried stones sticking up through the grassy tussocks. No one lives in Eregion now, only animals, including wolves and some fell beasts such as the *crebain* (malicious crows used as spies by, among others, Saruman). The coming of the Fourth Age brings little change to this place—which had remained desolate but beautiful since well before the Third Age began—but at least see it freed from the evils of Saruman's spies.

THE ENEDWAITH AND DUNLAND

The Enedwaith, or 'Middle Lands,' was the region that lay between the Two Kingdoms of Arnor and Gondor. Bordered on the north by the rivers Greyflood (Gwathló) and Swanfleet (Glanduin), and in the south by the Isen, it stretched from rocky cliffs overlooking the Sea in the west to the Misty Mountains and the Gap of Rohan in the east. To the east of the Old South Road, the land rose into foothills and then mountains, with a few farmholds or small villages nestled in the vales of the mountains along the streams and rivers. To the west, some of the smaller rivers ran into bogs, while others crisscrossed the plains on their way to the sea. A few stone circles or barrows appear on isolated hilltops, and in some places standing stones dot the landscape.

The Enedwaith was never densely populated, but the easternmost portion, Dunland, was still home, at the end of the Third Age, to the Dunlendings, the last, large group remaining of the Men who settled Eriador in the First Age.

Dunland has no cities or monuments. Each clan or village or homestead tends to its own affairs, acknowledging only such lords among their own people as suit them. Few things unite them: raids by Orcs coming down from the mountains; the needs of survival in times of harsh weather; and their enmity against their neighbours to the south, the Eorlings of Rohan (called *forgoil*, or 'Strawheads,' by the dark-haired Dunlendings).

The Dunlendings do not forget that all Rohan was once their land (the Dead Men of Dunharrow were their kin, as are the Men of Bree), and they cherish dreams of someday driving out the 'invaders,' even after all these centuries. They are not, however, an evil people. It is even said that some, after their defeat at Isengard during the War of the Ring, joined in the fight against Sauron in time for the final battles.

During the Fourth Age, some Dunlendings continue to nurse their grudges against Rohan, while others become more like the Bree-folk and take advantage of increased travel along the restored North-South Road to improve trade and the overall prosperity of the region. This leads them to become reluctant allies, but allies nonetheless, of the restored Dúnadan kingdom.

THE NORTH

ANGMAR

A desolate and empty land at the northernmost end of the Misty Mountains, Angmar arose as an opponent of Arnor and a force of great evil in about the year 1300 of the Third Age. Led by a fell being known only as the Witch-king—who later proved to be the Lord of the Nazgûl—the Hill-men, Orcs, Trolls, and fell beasts of Angmar made war on the Dúnedain of the North. Before it was itself destroyed in nearly seven centuries following its founding, Angmar inflicted such harm upon the Dúnedain that their diminishment was greatly hastened.

In the late Third Age, Angmar remained a place of peril and evil. A cold, dry, highland region marked by small forests of stunted, twisted trees and inhabited mostly by small beasts and birds, it is said to still contain the wights and phantoms of the lords who served the Witch-king, plus many fell beasts and things still more foul. Standing stones, ruined towers, and ruins more massive still appear here and there. Greatest of all are the ruins of the Witch-king's capital, Carn Dûm, which contain many fortresses, towers, dungeons, smithies, torture rooms, and treasure chambers. Few have explored these ruins, and fewer still returned. If adventurers' tales be true, many horrors yet lurk in this black and desolate land.

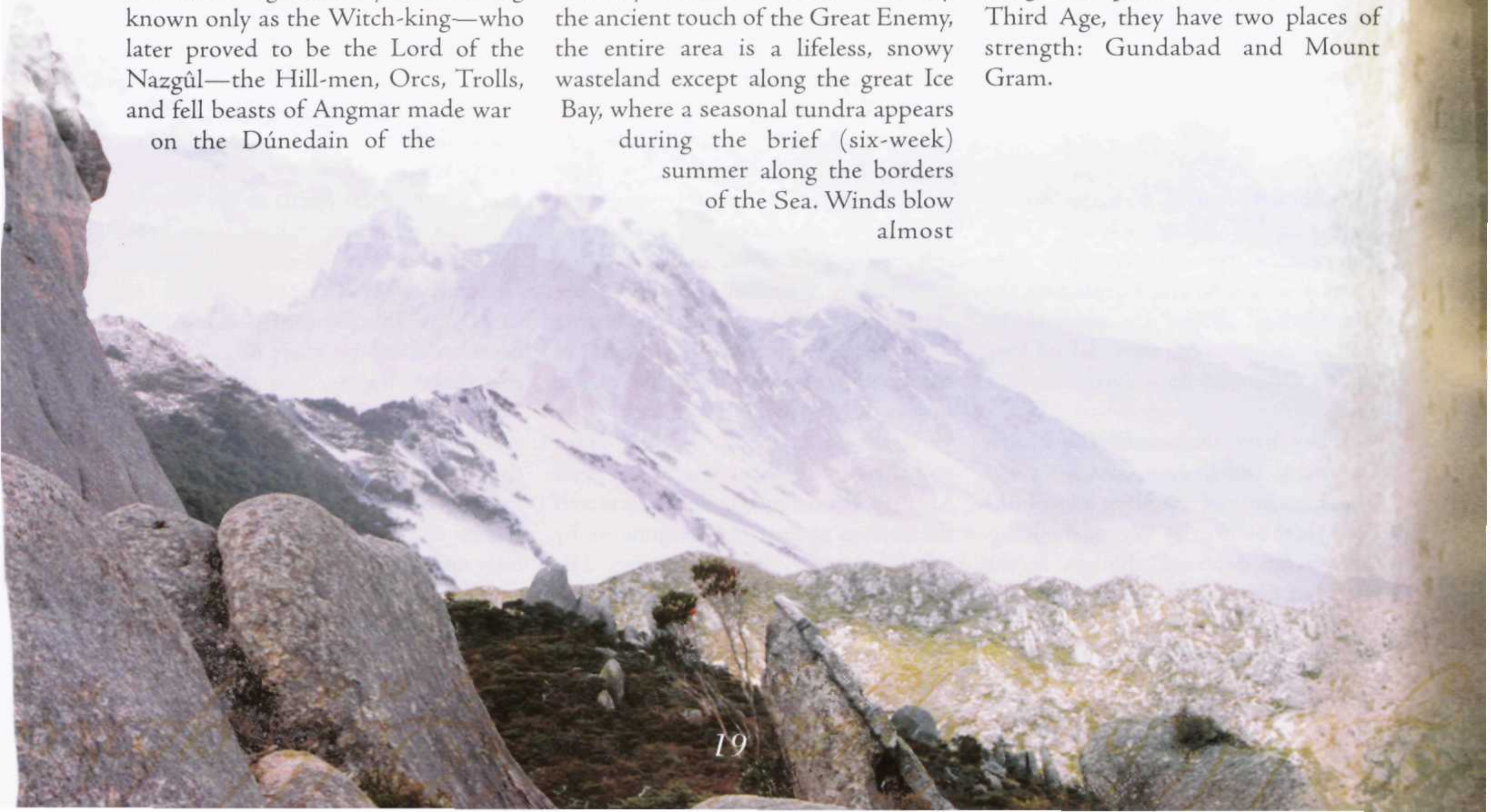
THE FORODWAITH

The Forodwaith ('Northern Waste'), the region north of Eriador, is an icy and barren land. Cursed by the ancient touch of the Great Enemy, the entire area is a lifeless, snowy wasteland except along the great Ice Bay, where a seasonal tundra appears during the brief (six-week) summer along the borders of the Sea. Winds blow almost constantly, and evil voices of things long since departed from Middle-earth can be heard on them.

The only folk who live in this freezing land are the Lossoth ('Snowmen'), the last descendants of the Forodwaith ('North-folk') of the First Age. Their name comes from their custom of living in icehouses. A semi-nomadic folk who roam along the great Ice Bay of Forochel, they resemble no other folk in Middle-earth, save perhaps the Woses. They live almost entirely on fish and seal-meat and care little for the outside world, although courageous outsiders have sometimes won their respect and (limited) trade. They use tools and weapons made of bone rather than wood, including specially shaped bones they wear on their feet to travel easily across ice and snow. They also have wheelless carts pulled by dogs or ice-deer.

THE ORC-STRONGHOLDS OF THE NORTH

Orcs live throughout the North, in the Misty Mountains and other dark, dangerous places. But in the late Third Age, they have two places of strength: Gundabad and Mount Gram.



GUNDABAD

Mount Gundabad is a massive peak located in the far north of the Misty Mountains, not far from the Grey Mountains. It was, long ago in the First Age, one of the great halls of the Dwarves. There they delved long and deep, establishing feast halls, treasure chambers, mines, and much more. But for all their skill and power, they could not withstand the attacks of the Orcs of the North, and eventually Gundabad fell. Ever since, it has been an Orc-stronghold, the greatest threat to the peace and security of the North since the fall of Angmar, particularly during those times when the Necromancer of Dol Guldur held distant sway over Gundabad.

Although the Dwarves made repeated attacks in an effort to regain Gundabad, not even during the War of the Dwarves and Orcs were they able to conquer and reclaim it. Even though three parts of its people were slain in the Battle of the Five Armies, Gundabad remained strong. During the War of the Ring, Orcs from there fought in the Battle of Dale. During the Fourth Age, King Elessar and the Men and Dwarves of the North fight many battles to destroy this threat, and eventually retake Gundabad for the West.

MOUNT GRAM

Although neither as large nor as strong as Gundabad, Mount Gram also presents a great threat to the Free Peoples of the North. Located on the western end of the Ettenmoors, its tunnels and warrens were delved long ago by Orcs who have lived here ever since.

They have threatened the North for many years, even attacking the Northfarthing of the Shire a few hundred years before the War of the Ring. They were defeated, though, at the Battle of Greenfields by an army led by Bandobras Took, a hobbit, who slew the Orc captain Golfimbul.

Although many of its Orcs crossed the Misty Mountains to fight against Dale in the War of the Ring, even more remained at home, hoping for the chance to plunder Eriador. They were cheated of this. However, it takes many long years, longer even than for Gundabad, before King Elessar and his allies destroy them and end their threat.

THE GREY MOUNTAINS (ERED MITHRIN)

Stretching across the north of Rhovanion, the Grey Mountains do not rise as high as the Misty Mountains, but they are often even more impassable and bleak. Steep peaks of shattered stone, scorched rock, and sinister caves, most folk avoid them. Despite this sinister reputation, at various times Dwarves—and some Men—have lived in the Grey Mountains. Orcs dwell here as well.

The most noted residents of the Grey Mountains, however, are also the reason why few other settlements endure. These peaks are famous as a home for dragons of all types: winged or wingless, firebreathing or cold-drake. Their depredations are the reason the valley between the range's two branches to the east, once a heather-covered scrubland, became known as the Withered Heath. For the most part, the dragons are content to steal treasure from each other and eat mountain goat, ram, or trespassing Orc, but on occasion a restless drake ventures farther afield, swooping down upon the grassy margins of Mirkwood to raid wild horses or the homes of Men for loot and feast.

It is said that only the very brave and the very foolish come to the Ered Mithrin, drawn by the desire to match themselves against the dragons or by the legends of dragon-treasure. The mountains are riddled with caves and tunnels. This includes Dwarf-ruins abandoned in Thrór's time (a few hundred years back), endless goblin-tunnels, natural caves, and even some fastnesses surviving from the First Age. Any of these may have been taken over by a dragon as its lair, or become a home to Orcs. Even late into the Fourth Age, it remains a perilous place.

RHOVANION (WILDERLAND)

Wilderland is the common name of the lands in Middle-earth east of the Misty Mountains and north of Mordor, merging imperceptibly into Rhûn, the Eastlands beyond the Redwater (which flowed from the Iron Hills down into the Sea of Rhûn). As large as Eriador and perhaps even more fertile, Rhovanion has never united under any single realm, but at one time or another it has been home to all the peoples of Middle-earth. One of the Five Wizards, Radagast the Brown, spent most of his time in Rhovanion among its birds and beasts, and he made his home at Rhosgobel, on the western edge of Mirkwood.

THE MISTY MOUNTAINS

This high range, the greatest remaining in Middle-earth, runs north-south for almost 800 miles, from the farthest north to the Gap of Rohan. Containing at least two of the ancestral homes of the Dwarves—Gundabad (now a stronghold of Orcs) and Khazad-dûm—it has long been occupied by other folks as well: the Great Eagles, fearsome Giants (found mostly throughout the northern half of the chain, especially near the Ettenmoors), Trolls, Orcs, and many other strange and fell beasts, of whom the Watcher in the Water is only one example.

Few passes exist over the Misty Mountains. The most reliable ways over them are the High Pass—linking the East-West Road and Old Forest Road (near Rivendell and Mirkwood)—and the Redhorn Gate (near Eregion and Moria), but both quickly become impassable early in winter. Most travellers prefer to skirt the Misty Mountains via the Gap of Rohan rather than risk the heights.

MIRKWOOD

' "[I]t was in the year that the White Council drove the dark power from Mirkwood, just before the Battle of Five Armies, that Bilbo found his ring." '
— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

The greatest forest of the northern world, Mirkwood dominates the heart of Rhovanion. For many leaving near its metes, it represents the very spirit of Wilderland. Over 400 miles long, and 200 or more miles wide at its broadest points, only the Old Forest Road crosses it. The forest contains many streams and small rivers, winding and uncertain paths, strange glens and grottoes, unusual clearings, and the dark Mountains of Mirkwood.

Once known as Greenwood the Great, Mirkwood became a place of darkness and horror relatively early in the Third Age, after the Necromancer (Sauron) raised Dol Guldur to the south and dwelt there. His Orcs and minions and other fell creatures drawn by his evil (such as giant spiders) made life difficult for the Wood-elves of Thranduil's realm in the north, as well as for the Wood-men who lived throughout and around much of the forest. Many of them soon fled, leaving only the hardiest, including the forces of Thranduil, to oppose the Necromancer's evil.

Throughout the rest of the Third Age, most folk shunned Mirkwood altogether, leaving only the most desperate or adventurous to walk beneath its leafy canopy. During the War of the Ring, forces from Dol Guldur attacked Lórien three times but were repulsed.

Thereafter Celeborn and Galadriel come to the stronghold of Dol Guldur and cast it down, opening its pits and dungeons to cleansing sunlight. Celeborn and Thranduil then rename it Eryn Lasgalen, the Wood of Greenleaves, and its southern regions become known as East Lórien.

THE WOODLAND REALM

Located in the north of Mirkwood, the Wood-elves' kingdom is difficult for any but the Elves themselves to find. While the Elves freely roam the woods for many miles in all directions, they live underground in great caves, a natural fortress they have reinforced by blocking all the entrances with great doors. They war incessantly with the giant spiders and Orcs that make the forest so dangerous, but they also take time to enjoy hunts, feasts, and song. Their ruler, Thranduil the Elvenking—a descendant of Thingol Greycloak, father of

Lúthien—is an Elf of both wisdom and might. Though suspicious of outsiders (particularly Dwarves), he is kind-hearted and generous to allies and friends.

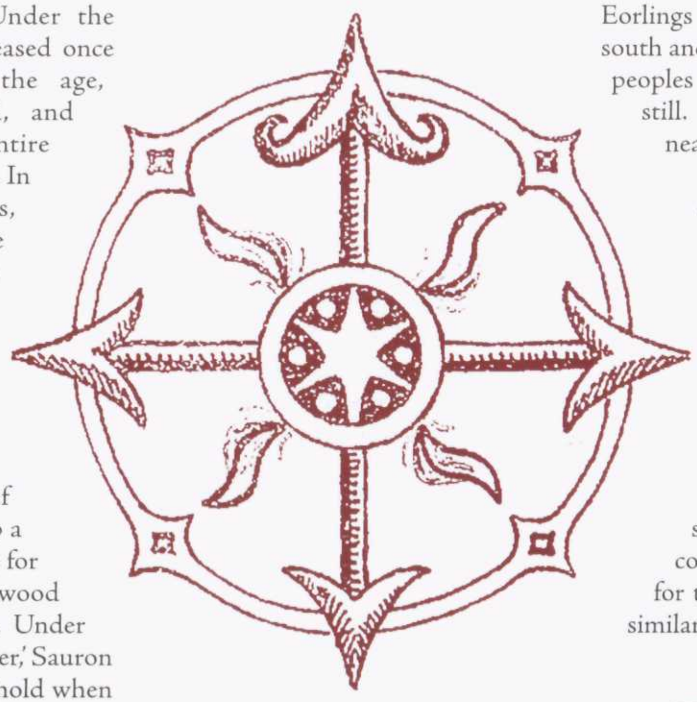
Thranduil's kingdom shrank slowly through most of the Third Age, due to the gradual rise of the Shadow from Dol Guldur. Near the end of the age, thanks to the Battle of Five Armies and the strengthening of ties with the men of Lake-town and Dale, as well as alliance with the Dwarves of the renewed Kingdom Under the Mountain, his power increased once more. At the end of the age, Mirkwood was cleansed, and Thranduil took the entire northern half as his realm. In addition, his son Legolas, one of the famed Nine Walkers, led many Elves south to Ithilien and established ties between the Wood-elves and Gondor.

DOL GULDUR

Dol Guldur ('Hill of Sorcery'), a dark tower atop a sinister hill, was responsible for the evil that turned Greenwood the Great into Mirkwood. Under the guise of 'the Necromancer,' Sauron used this as his new stronghold when he once again took physical form in Middle-earth, long after the loss of the One Ring. Even after he retook Mordor and rebuilt the Barad-dûr, he kept Nazgûl at Dol Guldur to menace the North. It was here that Thráin, son of Thrór, died after Sauron captured him and, under torment, took from him the last of the Seven Rings. Only one foe of Sauron ever entered Dol Guldur and escaped, no less than Gandalf the Grey himself, and even he was sore put to it.

Little is known of the interior of Dol Guldur, either the tower itself or the extensive dungeons delved below. No doubt it is a foul and evil place, filled with Nazgûl, Orcs, wicked Men, Wargs, and many other dark and fell things in service to the Lidless Eye. Only the boldest and mightiest adventurers would even dare to approach it, much less enter it.

After the War of the Ring, Galadriel destroys Dol Guldur, casting down its towers and walls and opening up its pits and underground chambers. Though maybe some evil still lurks there, it seems that of all Sauron's fortresses, this one alone was truly cleansed of evil after his fall.



THE VALES OF ANDUIN

The wide valley of the Anduin, running from the far North all the way down through Gondor to the Bay of Belfalas, contains much rich bottomland well-suited to farming and herding. Some of its inhabitants—mostly Middle Men such as the Beornings and peoples related to the Rohirrim—prefer hunting (especially of deer or waterfowl) or fishing, and the Beornings are renowned as beekeepers and bakers. In some places, the Vales are given over to prairies of wildflowers, berry-brambles, or tall grass, while wetter areas like the Gladden Fields are swampy, full of reeds and irises.

The Vales are home to many Men, the most significant population of the Middle People at the end of the Third Age. These included the Wood-men (close kin to the Men of Esgaroth and Dale) along the edge of Mirkwood, and the Beornings around the Carrock, Old Ford, and High Pass. A few centuries earlier, it included the Eorlings as well, before they moved south and became the Rohirrim. Some peoples related to them dwell here still. At one time, Hobbits lived near the Gladden Fields as well.

Being, at various points, so close to the Misty Mountains, Mirkwood, the East, and the western reaches of Mordor, the Vales of Anduin have often suffered Orc-raids, invasion by Easterlings, and other troubles. Despite this, no true cities have developed. The Men of the Vales live in isolated farmsteads or small communities, coming together as necessary for the common defence or other similar purposes.

THE IRON HILLS

This easternmost remnant of the ancient Iron Mountains, the Iron Hills (really more like small mountains) are low and rounded, worn down by the passage of time. As the name indicates, the area is rich in iron and other ores, giving the Hills themselves—and the River Redwater (Carnen)—a characteristically rusty, brown-red colour.

The Dwarves have had mines and halls here for time out of mind, and some of Durin's folk established a permanent home here after being driven out of the Grey Mountains. The Dwarves of the Iron Hills were known for their simple but functional work, preferring as they did practicality over ornateness, and silence or plain-speaking over elaborate speech in their dealings with others. Dáin Ironfoot, their leader at the end of the Third Age, became King Under the Mountain and leader of the Longbeards after the death of Thorin Oakenshield, whereupon many of the Dwarves here removed to Erebor. However, some stayed, and the mines remained open even into the Fourth Age.

EREBOR, THE LONELY MOUNTAIN

The Kingdom Under the Mountain was founded in this isolated peak by Dwarves of Durin's folk, who made it their home after fleeing Moria. Some years later, the kingdom was diminished when many Dwarves went to the Grey Mountains following the discovery of rich veins there. But the perils of those dragon-haunted mountains eventually became too much and the Dwarves returned to Erebor. Some even moved to the Iron Hills.

At its height, the Kingdom Under the Mountain recalled for some the splendour of lost Khazad-dûm, with its great halls and endless tunnels. King Thrór ruled not just over the Dwarves who lived within the mountain but dominated the nearby towns of Men—Esgaroth and Dale—as well. In the end, however, its very glory doomed Erebor. Smaug the Golden, greatest of the dragons of the Ered Mithrin, drawn by rumour of its riches, plundered the Kingdom and surrounding lands, slaughtered the Dwarves, and took their halls as his lair. The few survivors abandoned their home and removed either to the Iron Hills or the Blue Mountains.

For almost 200 years, Erebor was desolate, the lands about it reduced to a wilderness. Finally, however, with the aid of Bilbo Baggins, a Hobbit burglar, the Kingdom Under the Mountain was re-established and once again became the home of Durin's folk. Under King Dáin Ironfoot, Erebor prospered and forged alliances with Esgaroth, the Wood-elves, and the renewed town of Dale. King Dáin's valiant defence enabled it to survive the worst Sauron could throw against it during the War of the Ring, and although Dáin himself perished, his kingdom thrived in the early Fourth Age. Dwarves from Erebor, led by Gimlí son of Glóin, forged new gates for Minas Tirith and crafted many other great works for King Elessar.

The Lonely Mountain

ESGAROTH AND DALE

Esgaroth, or Lake-town, is but the most recent of several towns built on platforms over the western waters of the Long Lake. The platform helps the town defend itself from raids by Wargs or Orcs, since the townsfolk can always cut the bridge to the shore and isolate themselves in time of danger. If disaster, such as a fire or the attack of Smaug, befalls the town, the survivors simply rebuild a new Lake-town nearby.

The Lake-men are great traders, venturing as far west as the Wood-elves' home up the Forest River, south and east down the River Running all the way to Dorwinion, and up the Redwater to the Dwarf-mines in the Iron Hills. They are also skilled fishermen and maintain fields on the shores of Long Lake for growing grains and vegetables. A Mayor, elected by popular vote, leads a council of guildmasters, merchants, and other prominent folk that governs the town.

By contrast with Esgaroth, the folk of Dale are less inclined to be travellers or boatmen and more likely craftsmen or farmers (though they do maintain a healthy trade, sometimes as far south as Gondor). Dale exists hand-in-hand with the Kingdom Under the Mountain. The Men of Dale grow food and raise animals to sell to the Dwarves, who in turn provide them with forged items they need and teach many of them who have the talent or inclination a few of the secrets of craftsmanship. The craftsmen of Dale even exceed the skill of the Dwarves in one craft: woodcarving. A King rules Dale and the surrounding countryside (save only the mountain itself). He exerts great influence over Esgaroth as well.

Dale was so close to the Lonely Mountain that once Thrór's kingdom was destroyed, Dale was doomed as well. However, after the Kingdom Under the Mountain was restored, Dale too was renewed by King Bard the dragon-slayer. Overrun during the War of the Ring, when the forces of Sauron slew King Brand, its folk sought refuge in the Dwarves' halls. Most of them survived, and they quickly repaired the

damage done by Orcs and evil Men. In the early Fourth Age, Dale partakes in the general prosperity of that era, extending farmsteads to the south and east and west.

LOTHLÓRIEN

Small by comparison to Mirkwood or Fangorn—only about half the size of the Shire, or some 60 miles long and 40 miles wide—Lórien was nonetheless a great wood, unlike any other in Middle-earth. Here only did *mallorn* trees grow, and in many ways Lothlórien ('Land of the Dreamflower') recalled the vanished First Age and distant Eldamar more than the mortal world. Time sometimes seemed to flow oddly here while Galadriel's power lasted, and she was also able to ward the land with the power of her Ring (Nenya, the Ring of Water). Unwelcome intruders found it difficult and perilous to work their way into the heart of the wood.

From the outside, Lórien simply looked like a lovely, empty wood of graceful trees. But to enter it was to step into another world. Despite living here for thousands of years, the Elves left little mark of their presence. Hidden deep within the woods, where the trees were enormous, the folk of Lórien (mostly Silvan Elves, but some others as well) lived high in the branches of the trees on great wooded platforms known as flets or *telain*. Also deep in the woods were many grassy hills and clearings. Lórien was entirely unlike Fangorn, the Old Forest, and Mirkwood in that the woods were light and uncrowded, even where the trees were of great size, rather than dark and shadowed.

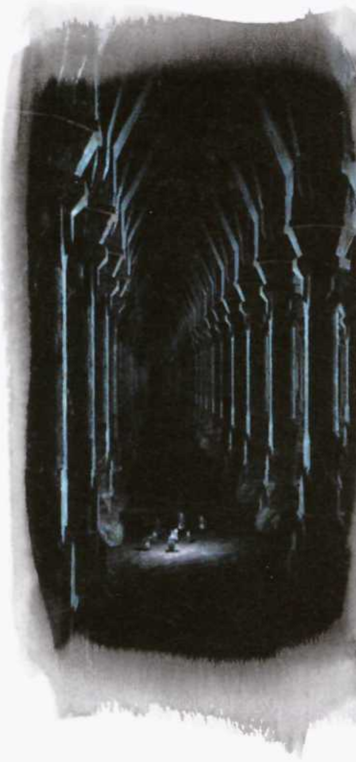
After Lady Galadriel's departure, Lórien is abandoned, its folk either forsaking Middle-earth to follow her or removing with Celeborn to the Forest of Greenleaves ('East Lórien,' as southern Mirkwood came to be known). Thereafter Lórien is, like Eregion, a beautiful but sad and empty land.

MORIA (KHAZAD-DÛM)

' "This is the great realm and city of the Dwarrowdelf. And of old it was not darksome, but full of light and splendour, as is still remembered in our songs." '
— Gimli, The Fellowship of the Ring

Founded by Durin long years ago when 'the world was young, the mountains green,' Khazad-dûm was the greatest of the ancestral halls of the Dwarves. For millennia, it was one of the greatest wonders of the northern world. During the First and Second Ages, Durin's folk delved, mined, and built beneath three mighty peaks in the southern Misty Mountains: Barazinbar (Caradhras, or the Redhorn), Zirak-zigil (Celebdil, or Silvertine), and Bundushathûr (Fanuidhol, or Mount Cloudyhead). Eventually their halls stretched all the way from Dimrill Dale, the original settlement on the east side of the Misty Mountains, through the mountains to the borders of Eregion. The result was a vast underground city, some 40 miles wide, over 70 miles long, and many, many levels deep, with corridors for streets, halls and chambers for houses and rooms, and grottoes for parks.

Although the Elves called it Moria, the 'Black Chasm,' it was filled with the light of Dwarf-lamps and the noise of Dwarves at work. Among its wonders were Durin's Bridge—a narrow span overlooking a vast chasm just inside the East Gate—and the Endless Stair, which ran from the deepest dungeon to the observation chamber within the hollowed peak of Zirakzigil known as Durin's Tower. And, of course, there were many living chambers, workrooms, storerooms, smithies, display rooms, libraries, halls of records, mausoleums, royal tombs, staterooms, treasuries, mine shafts, guardrooms, wellshafts, and an unbelievable number of stairs.



Khazad-dûm endured for over 5,000 years of unbroken habitation, surviving even the upheaval of the ancient world at the end of the First Age and the Dark Years when Sauron overran virtually all of the West of Middle-earth during the Second Age. It was finally destroyed from within when the Dwarves delved too deeply in search of *mithril* ore, the foundation of their power and prosperity.

They unleashed a Balrog of Morgoth who had fled there and hidden since its master's fall. Within a year, the Balrog killed first King Durin VI, then his successor King Náin I, and wreaked such havoc that the Dwarves never recovered. The desperate survivors were forced to abandon their home and the tombs of their ancestors and flee. Khazad-dûm became a haunt of Orcs, Trolls, and other evil creatures.

Late in the Third Age, Durin's folk made two attempts to return to Moria. The first, a quixotic effort by Thrór the Old, led to his murder at the hands of the Orc-chieftain Azog, and began the War of the Dwarves and Orcs. The second, by Balin son of Fundin, established a colony in eastern Moria, but Balin and his people lost their lives to Orcs and other horrors after just five years. During the War of the Ring, the Fellowship, lacking any other path, chose to travel through Moria, encountering many Orcs and Trolls, and finally the Balrog itself. Gandalf the Grey stood against the Balrog, cast it down, and slew it, but at the cost of his own life. With their ancient home now free of this great evil, the Dwarves await only the birth of Durin VII to gather their forces, cleanse Khazad-dûm, and reclaim it at long last.

FANGORN

A remnant of the primeval forest that once stretched from the Vales of Anduin through the Gap of Rohan all the way to the Grey Havens, Fangorn is, like the Old Forest, a place where the trees are unusually alert. Some of them are even capable of moving their limbs, or of speech. This is due to the presence here of the few remaining Ents in Middle-earth. The eldest of the Ents, Treebeard (Fangorn), gave his name to the forest.

Fangorn is filled with trees of all kinds, from the tenderest shoots to the most ancient boles, all tenderly cared for by the Shepherds of the Trees. Hanging mosses from the branches and deep piles of shed leaves on the ground make it clear to any visitor that few outsiders come here. Travellers should beware, as many of the Ents have become dark of heart and mind. These Huorns, as they are called, are extremely hostile to any who might menace their trees and have long, long memories of every tree they have ever lost to axe or fire.

In the Fourth Age, Fangorn Forest admits a few visitors (the Hobbits Merry and Pippin, the friends Legolas and Gimli) and plants new trees in Isengard around the tower of Orthanc. For the most part, though, it remains as it has age after age.

THE SOUTH

Among the Free Peoples of the West of Middle-earth, 'the South' refers to Gondor and those lands over which it once held sway. All the regions described in this section were once part of the Kingdom of Gondor at its greatest extent, although some were only under its control for a short time, or in name only.

The South is warmer and milder in climate than Eriador or Rhovanion, thanks to its latitude and the proximity of the Great Sea. The vast inlet that is the Bay of Belfalas brings the Sea within 200 miles of virtually all of Greater Gondor. Most of these regions are within 100 miles of it.

Of the Five Wizards, Saruman the White (afterwards Saruman of Many Colours), concerned himself most with the South. He eventually made Isengard his home, and later his fortress.

THE BROWN LANDS

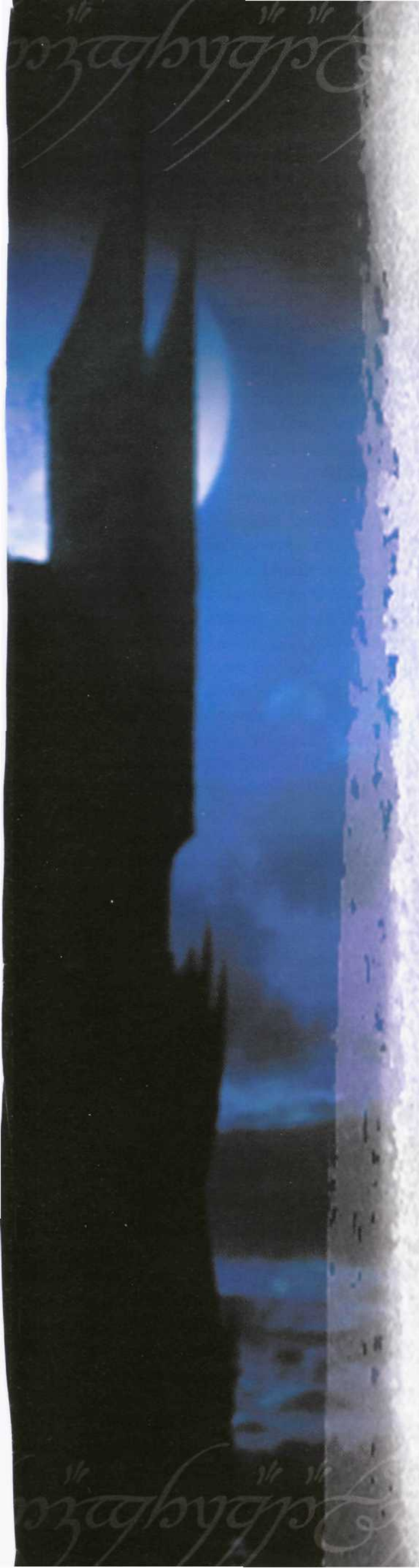
Once one of the most fertile regions in all Middle-earth, the area now known as the Brown Lands was formerly the great garden of the Entwives (female Ents), who taught to Men the arts of sowing, reaping, and growing. But during the War of the Last Alliance, Sauron's forces ravaged these lands, destroying the gardens and slaying or driving away the Entwives, who have remained lost to the Ents ever since

Since that time, the Brown Lands have been a barren wasteland, full of bare stone and hard earth, a place where few things grow. It was of such places that Galdor spoke when he said that 'Sauron can torment and destroy the very hills.' Even with the renewal of Middle-earth during the Fourth Age, this land remains bleak and lifeless. Some injuries go too deep for any healing.

ISENGARD

A circle of stone enclosing a wide courtyard with the great black tower of Orthanc in the middle, Isengard was once Gondor's northernmost outpost. Orthanc itself was built in the Númenórean mode and was nigh indestructible, while the surrounding wall was of slightly later and more modest construction, although still impressive. One of the four *palantíri* of the South was placed here, where it remained until the War of the Ring. Even after the former province of Calenardhon was ceded to the Eorlings and became Rohan, Isengard remained part of Gondor and under the control of the Dúnedain of the South, until Saruman was allowed to take up residence there about 250 years before the War.

When the desire for power corrupted Saruman, he turned Isengard into his own private domain, vastly



expanding its underground storerooms into barracks, treasuries, armouries, smithies, and prisons, the better to house his army of Orcs, half-Orcs, Wargs, and Dunlendings. The green plain encircled by the Walls of Isengard was paved over, and all the woodlands for many miles about were destroyed for firewood or out of sheer malice. Soon a constant pall of smoke from underground fires hung over Isengard.

The walls encircling Isengard were destroyed by the Ents during the War of the Ring, and the underground chambers were flooded through their diversion of the Isen into the circle, although Orthanc itself escaped harm. After Saruman abandoned Orthanc at the war's end, King Elessar took back possession of the tower, having already regained the *palantír*. But he also appointed the Ents guardians of the new forest, the Watchwood. Thus, at the beginning of the Fourth Age, Isengard has become a black tower (Orthanc) standing in a great circular pool, surrounded by a forest of transplanted trees (the Treegarth) watched over by an Ent or two.

ROHAN

Although long part of Gondor, Rohan bears little sign of it. Formerly the province of Calenardhon, it was an area of farmers and shepherds with no major cities or large settlements, its considerable people scattered evenly in farms or homesteads.

Its people reduced in numbers by the Great Plague, the land's eastern marches remained nearly empty for some 800 years while Dunlendings reclaimed its western reaches. In the late Third Age, the Steward Cirion gave Calenardhon to the Eorlings in return for their aid to Gondor in the war against the Balchoth, and the land became widely known as Rohan. By the time of the War of the Ring, sixteen generations later, the Rohirrim ('the Horse-lords') had embraced their homeland much as the Hobbits embraced the Shire, and they could no longer think of living anywhere else.

Rohan is a wide land of great grassy plains and low, rolling hills, ideal for raising horses, herding, and farming. Toward the east, the ground becomes marshy, with long fields of reeds and rushes along the banks of the Great River. To the west, the ground rises into heather-covered hills. To the north and south lie forests (Fangorn and the Drúadan Forest, respectively), which the Rohirrim traditionally avoid.

The horse-folk also eschew cities, preferring to live on scattered homesteads and farms. Their only major settlement is the royal city of Edoras, where the king has his great meadhall of Meduseld and where the royal burial mounds are located. Other important sites include the Hornburg at Helm's Deep—a mighty fortress the Gondorians built in the old days—and Dunharrow—a retreat created by the now-vanished, pre-Númenórean inhabitants of the White Mountains, who also made the Púkel-men and the Paths of the Dead. The Dunlendings are their kin.

DRÚADAN FOREST

A small tangle of trees with many hidden paths running through its dark thickets, Drúadan Forest is home to the Woses—the Drúedain, also known as Woodwoses or Wild Men—a people unlike any other in Middle-earth except, perhaps, the Lossoth of Forodwaith. Secretive and cautious, the Woses hide from other Men, who sometimes hunt them out of malice or ignorance. But during the War of the Ring, they helped the Rohirrim to reach Gondor in time to help lift the siege, thus earning the eternal goodwill of King Elessar. After the war, he granted the forest to them, making it a protected enclave belonging to no kingdom. Thus the coming of the Fourth Age finds the Woses and their wood in peace.

At least one other group of Woses survived to the end of the Third Age. They lived in a small, dark woods near the mouth of the Isen, labelled on some maps Drúwaith Iaur, or 'Old Púkel-land.'

GONDOR

The greatest of all kingdoms of Men in Middle-earth, overshadowed only by Sauron's empire at its height, Gondor ('Stone-land') survived over three millennia of attacks, invasions, plague, disruptions of succession, and civil war. Through it all, the Gondorians never wavered in their defiance of Sauron or in their dedication to the Númenórean traditions they inherited from Elendil and his sons. Unlike the Dúnedain of Arnor, Gondor preserved the great Númenórean seafaring tradition. Even if in later days they largely restricted themselves to coastal travel, they still remembered the great armadas they once assembled to help defeat Angmar or the Corsairs.

As the Third Age wore on, Gondor dwindled in population and territory until, by the time of the War of the Ring, most of its people dwelt south of the White Mountains, along the river valleys or by the shores of the Great Sea in Anfalas, Belfalas, Lamedon, and Lebennin, or along the eastern end of the mountains in Anórien. South Gondor had been abandoned following repeated invasions from the Haradrim, while Ithilien—once Isildur's principality, just as Anórien had been Anárion's—was deserted. Of the five great cities of Gondor—Osgiliath, Pelargir, the Haven at Umbar, Minas Ithil ('the Tower of the Moon'), and Minas Anor ('the Tower of the Sun')—only Pelargir and Minas Anor remained. They were both half-deserted, and the latter was renamed Minas Tirith ('the Tower of Guard'). Osgiliath, the original capital, was ruined during the civil war over twenty centuries earlier, while Minas Ithil had been captured by the Nazgûl and became Minas Morgul ('the Tower of Sorcery'), and Umbar was lost to the Corsairs. Mordor, whose passes had been occupied for centuries following the War of the Last Alliance, was eventually abandoned, the troops stationed there recalled for use elsewhere, leaving it open for Sauron to reclaim.

Gondor is a pleasant land with a warm climate, plentiful rain in season, and rich fields. The delta lands near the mouth of the Anduin are some of the richest farmland in Middle-earth. Fishing plays a large part in the economy, and in earlier days trade with foreign lands provided much of Gondor's legendary wealth. Its cities, fortresses, and bridges are all in the classic Númenórean style of huge, close-fitting, mortarless blocks, awe-inspiring to Men, Dwarves, and Elves alike.

With the coming of the Fourth Age, Gondor experiences a great renaissance on all levels: cultural, political, military, and artistic. The restoration of the monarchy revitalizes traditions which have become mere custom. The diplomatic gifts, military experience, and personal ties of King Elessar (and Queen Arwen) lead to the renewal of old alliances, the conquest of new territories, and mutually beneficial exchanges with most of the peoples of western Middle-earth. Not only does Gondor regain the lands it had lost to the East and South, but its sister-kingdom of Arnor is re-established in the North, ending Gondor's isolation as the sole surviving Númenórean realm. Ithilien is repopulated and once again becomes a princedom, under the rule of Prince Faramir and Princess Éowyn. Legolas, one of the Nine Walkers, establishes a Wood-elf colony in Ithilien that greatly enhances the beauty of its woods. And Gimli son of Glóin, Lord of Aglarond, lends the aid of master smiths and architects to rebuild the gates of Minas Tirith, the great bridge at Osgiliath, the Deeping Wall at Helm's Deep, and many other structures.

MINAS TIRITH

'For the fashion of Minas Tirith was such that it was built on seven levels, each delved into the hill, and about each was set a wall, and in each wall was a gate.'
— The Return of the King

The greatest city remaining on Middle-earth at the end of the Third Age, Minas Tirith was founded by Anárion, Elendil's son, late in the Second Age. It served as Gondor's capital after the older, greater city of Osgiliath fell into decline about midway through the Third Age, a distinction Minas Tirith preserved after the return of the king at the beginning of the Fourth Age. Here could be found the Hallows where the kings of old were buried—the Hall of the Stewards was consumed by fire during Denethor's suicide—the White Tree, Gondor's archives and hall of lore, and of course the Royal House, home to Elessar, Arwen, and their children. The city was greatly beautified at the beginning of the Fourth Age by the stonework of Dwarf-craftsmen, tree-filled parks created by visiting Wood-elves, and the presence of Queen Arwen and her maidens.

ITHILIEN

Widely held to be the most beautiful of Gondor's regions, this was originally Isildur's princedom: a land of pleasant woodlands, flowering meadows, and many waterfalls along the swift-flowing streams working their way down from the eastern mountain-wall to the river in the west. Even Sauron's occupation, while it drove out all but a wary few of the Dúnedain, did little harm to the land itself, and it soon recovered under the care of Prince Faramir and Éowyn, the White Lady, aided by Wood-elves under the guidance of Legolas. Unlike Anórien on the west bank of Anduin, Ithilien was not heavily farmed except near the rivers and around Minas Ithil (later Minas Morgul).

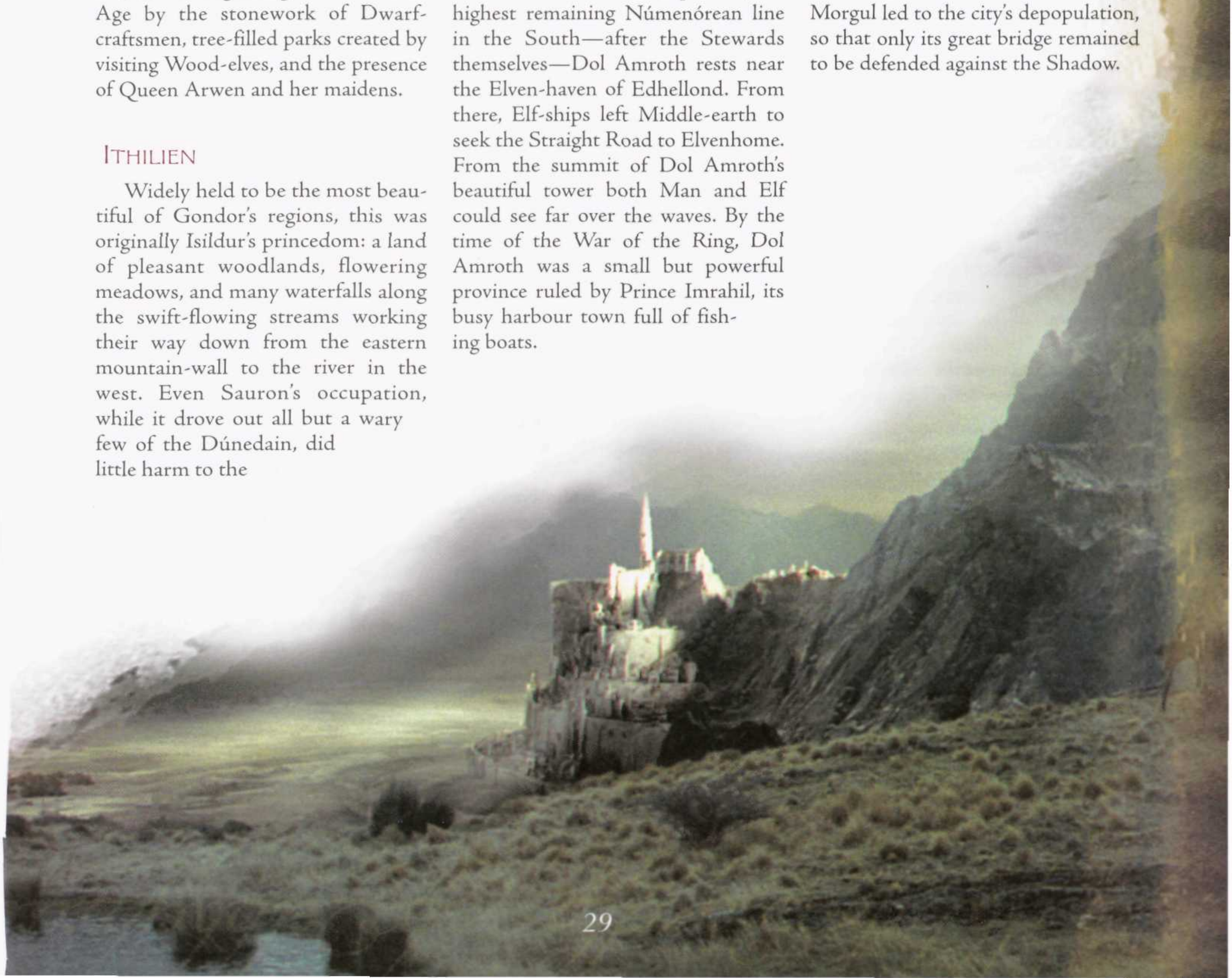
The Morgul-vale is the only area not restored during the Fourth Age. Instead, its fields are burned and its tower razed, with the ruins forbidden to all to prevent anything from disturbing or awaking the evils that might lurk there still.

DOL AMROTH

Home to a house of princes, the highest remaining Númenórean line in the South—after the Stewards themselves—Dol Amroth rests near the Elven-haven of Edhellond. From there, Elf-ships left Middle-earth to seek the Straight Road to Elvenhome. From the summit of Dol Amroth's beautiful tower both Man and Elf could see far over the waves. By the time of the War of the Ring, Dol Amroth was a small but powerful province ruled by Prince Imrahil, its busy harbour town full of fishing boats.

OSGILIATH

Once the greatest city of Gondor, and perhaps all Middle-earth, Osgiliath was built over the River Anduin, with some of its most impressive and beautiful buildings standing on massive bridges over the river itself. This was the original capital of Isildur and Anárion and the home of the most powerful of the *palantíri*. But while its location placed the city within easy reach, by water or by road, of any region in the empire, it also made its possession strategically critical to any invader seeking passage into Gondor's heartland from beyond Anduin. The gradual evacuation of Ithilien before the threat of Minas Morgul led to the city's depopulation, so that only its great bridge remained to be defended against the Shadow.



But Osgiliath's decline had begun long before it actually faced an external enemy. During the civil war that wracked Gondor some six centuries before the kingship lapsed, the royal court here was destroyed, and the *palantír* was lost to the river. The last of its great bridges was broken just before the War of the Ring by desperate Gondorians seeking to stop the enemy from pouring across the river. The city is restored early in the Fourth Age, and King Elessar rebuilds the bridges and harbours. Though Osgiliath once again becomes a bustling trade centre, it never regains its preeminence.

PELARGIR

The most ancient city in Gondor, Pelargir began as a haven of the Faithful far back in the Second Age. It was here that Elendil's sons made landfall after the Downfall of Númenor, and here that the Ship-kings of Gondor housed their great fleets. Like the rest of Gondor, Pelargir slowly declined as the Third Age wore on, but it remained a busy river-port city, easily able to accommodate seagoing vessels. With the restoration of the kingdom at the beginning of the Fourth Age, Pelargir once again becomes the main starting point for much of Gondor's trade.

MORDOR

'Still far away, forty miles at least, they saw Mount Doom...its huge cone rising to great height, where its reeking head was swathed in cloud.'

— The Return of the King

A desolate and blasted land, fenced by forbidding mountains, Sauron the Great claimed Mordor for his own long ago, during the early Second Age. It was here, in the fires of Sammath Naur in the heart of Orodruin, Mount Doom, that he forged the One Ring. That act led to the War of the Elves and Sauron, and it was from Mordor that the Dark Lord launched the attacks that overran almost all of Eriador. Throughout the long years in Middle-earth, each time Sauron has been defeated, he has either withdrawn to Mordor to rebuild his strength, or abandoned it for a time to hide—but he has always returned eventually.

Mordor is a bleak and inhospitable land. Surrounded on three sides by mountain chains—the Ered Lithui ('Ash Mountains') to the north and the Ephel Dúath ('Mountains of Shadow') to the south and west—it receives almost no rainfall. Like a true desert, it is barren and lifeless. Ash from Orodruin covers its northern reaches and often blocks the sunlight for days. What little rain does fall snakes across the arid plains, eventually emptying into the Sea of Núrnen, whose bitter waters have no outlet.

Mordor has no native peoples, so far as the Wise know. Though perhaps Orcs have lived there since the earliest days; uncounted thousands of them certainly dwell there now. Sauron also has Trolls, slaves of many races, and fell beasts and monsters of every description within his realm. Only the bravest, mightiest, or most foolish of heroes would dare to enter the Black Land with so many foes arrayed against them.

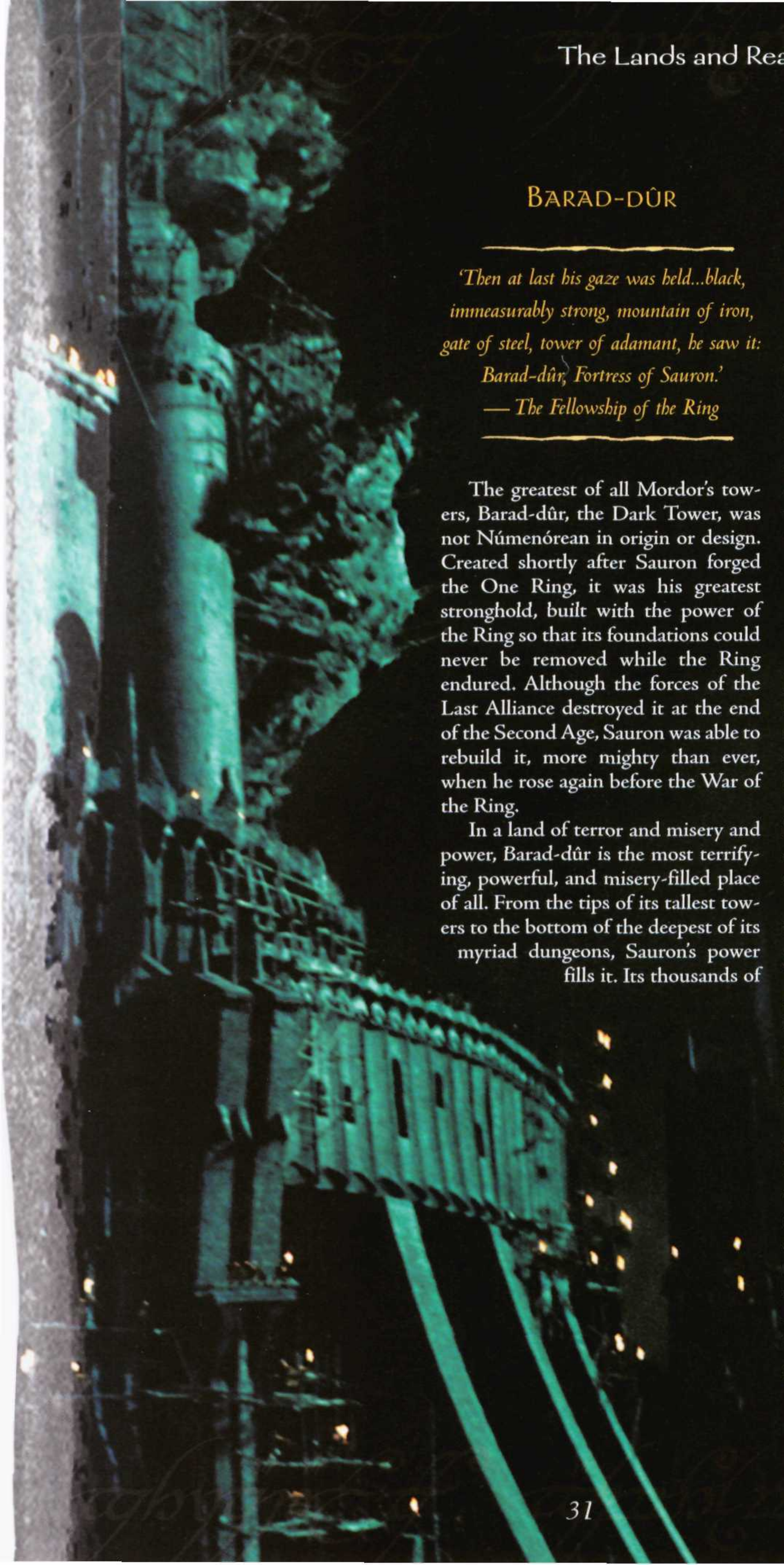
Great roads crisscross Mordor, running from fortress to fortress, with great bridges in Númenórean fashion arching across any ravines or clefts in the way. A great fortress guards each entrance into Mordor: Minas Morgul in Morgul Vale, matched by the nearby Tower of Cirith Ungol atop that cursed pass; the great gate of the Morannon flanked by the Towers of the Teeth at Cirith Gorgor; and doubtless others unknown to the West on either side of the gap in the mountains on Mordor's eastern border. The Dúnedain of Gondor built all these fortresses save the Morannon (which was built by Sauron himself) during their watch over Sauron's land, using the typically massive, mortarless stone techniques the Númenóreans were famed for. All of them were destroyed in the earthquake that marked Sauron's passing at the end of the War of the Ring.

With the coming of the Fourth Age, not only Sauron and his Ringwraiths but most of the Black Númenóreans, Orcs, and monsters of Mordor have perished. King Elessar has taken up sovereignty over this blighted land, and has granted the area around the Sea of Núrnen to those Men who had been slaves of the Dark Lord. They have taken this land as their own, to farm for themselves. What evils may lurk there still, no one knows.

THE DEAD MARSHES

Although not part of Mordor proper, these horrible fens are on the margins of Sauron's land and show the strong mark of his touch. Once natural swamps, not dissimilar to the Gladden Fields or the Nindalf, they were tainted by the evil spreading out of Mordor. Over time, they grew to engulf the burial-sites of warriors from the War of the Last Alliance: Orcs and Dúnedain and Elves.

Even centuries later, the images of the dead, bearing corpse-candles, can still be seen by any who look into the pools. It is said that those who fail to resist their lure will join them in death and become a corpse-candle in turn. Little has changed in the Marshes with the coming of the Fourth Age. Some evils are too old and deep to be set right quickly.



BARAD-DÛR

'Then at last his gaze was held...black,
immeasurably strong, mountain of iron,
gate of steel, tower of adamant, he saw it:
Barad-dûr, Fortress of Sauron.'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

The greatest of all Mordor's towers, Barad-dûr, the Dark Tower, was not Númenórean in origin or design. Created shortly after Sauron forged the One Ring, it was his greatest stronghold, built with the power of the Ring so that its foundations could never be removed while the Ring endured. Although the forces of the Last Alliance destroyed it at the end of the Second Age, Sauron was able to rebuild it, more mighty than ever, when he rose again before the War of the Ring.

In a land of terror and misery and power, Barad-dûr is the most terrifying, powerful, and misery-filled place of all. From the tips of its tallest towers to the bottom of the deepest of its myriad dungeons, Sauron's power fills it. Its thousands of inhabitants—Orcs, Trolls, Black Númenóreans, and things more foul—serve only his will, working whatever evil he decrees. So strong is the Dark Tower that no force in Middle-earth could hope to conquer it without the Ring.

Barad-dûr fell at last when Frodo Baggins destroyed the Ring. Even the fortress's foundations crumbled away forever as the towers fell and the dungeons collapsed in upon themselves. During the Fourth Age, none of the West have dared approach the accursed place, where the taint of evil lingers still and fell things may yet live.

MINAS MORGUL

Once the fair city of Minas Ithil, Minas Morgul was taken by Sauron's forces over a thousand years before the end of the Third Age and made into a place of horror. One of the chief lairs of the Nazgûl, it rested in a vale on the west side of the Ephel Dúath, known as Morgul Vale, and it dominated all approaches to the north, south, east, or west.

Surrounded by fields of pale white flowers that shone corpse-like in the darkness, its chief feature was the Tower of Sorcery, which glowed with a pale luminescence. The topmost level of the Tower rotated slowly back and forth, offering an ideal platform from which to survey the surrounding lands.

After the War of the Ring, Sauron's forces abandoned Minas Morgul, but such was the horror of the place that the Army of the West refuses to enter it, contenting themselves with burning the fields of corpse-flowers. King Elessar orders its destruction early in the Fourth Age, but the folk of Ithilien keep clear of the vale so as not to stir up any lingering evil.

OUTLYING REALMS

Little is known in the West of the following lands. A few of the Wise, such as Aragorn and Gandalf, have journeyed widely in such far-flung lands from time to time, and in the Fourth Age Kings Elessar and Éomer fight many wars in Rhûn and Harad to pacify the remaining enemies of Gondor as best they might.

Two of the Five Wizards are said to have passed into the East, but thereafter word of them came never again to the West. It may be that they stirred up resistance to Sauron's dominion, forcing the Dark Lord to divert considerable forces to maintaining control over those areas, forces that would otherwise have been used to overwhelm the West during the War of the Ring. But it is also rumoured that, like Saruman, those wizards fell into corruption and darkness. Perhaps they served Sauron as lieutenants, and they may have taken to themselves such power as to one day become Dark Lords themselves.

UMBAR

The great haven of Umbar was one of the Númenóreans' major strongholds during the Second Age, when they exerted authority over Middle-earth. It was at Umbar that Sauron surrendered to Ar-Pharazôn the Golden and was carried back in chains to Númenor, which he soon corrupted. In later days, Umbar came to be a stronghold of the King's Men, or Black Númenóreans as they were later known—those Númenóreans whom Sauron seduced to evil.

In its early days, under the rule of the 'Ship-kings,' Gondor took Umbar and made it a part of the South-kingdom, but it was lost many centuries later when the forces defeated in civil war retreated there, taking with them

the greater part of Gondor's fleet and becoming the feared Corsairs. The Corsairs of Umbar remained a thorn in Gondor's side for the rest of the Third Age, frequently raiding its southern coasts and joining in many of the subsequent invasions by other peoples. In fact, the Corsairs would have done great damage to Gondor during the War of the Ring, perhaps even enough to defeat it, had Aragorn (as 'Thorongil') not led a raid against them several decades before and destroyed most of their fleet. What forces the Corsairs did send against Gondor during the War were defeated by Aragorn with the aid of the Dead Men of Dunharrow, and their ships were turned to the aid of Minas Tirith.

After Sauron's fall, the Corsairs remained bitter enemies of Gondor in general and King Elessar in particular, forcing many decades of war and struggle before he was able to retake Umbar and make it a part of the Reunited Kingdom.

HARAD

Harad ('the South') is the name the Free Peoples of the West give to the lands south of Gondor and Mordor. Men, the Haradrim, inhabit it. They are far different from the Men of the West, or even their nearer kin: the Easterlings. They have dark skin, ranging from dusky brown to nearly black. In the deserts, plains, and jungles of the South, they have established many kingdoms, strong and proud, with fierce armies of scimitar-armed warriors and mighty *mûmakil*, or oliphaunts, to aid them in battle. Though some are barbaric and cruel, others have long traditions, customs, and realms they would hold equal to any in Middle-earth.

The Haradrim, or Southrons, have long been enemies of Gondor and allies of Mordor and have fought the descendants of the Númenóreans many times. During intervals of peace, some trade travels the Harad Road, enriching both lands, but it is infrequent at best.

Many Haradrim served in Sauron's armies in the War of the Ring. One of their greatest chieftains was slain by King Théoden of Rohan in the Battle of the Pelennor Fields. Those who survived the final disaster at the Battle of the Black Gate fought their way off the field and retreated. The few who eventually reached their homelands stirred up opposition to King Elessar for years to come. By contrast, those who surrendered were pardoned and returned first, and they for the most part counselled peace with Gondor rather than opposing so mighty a king.

RHÛN

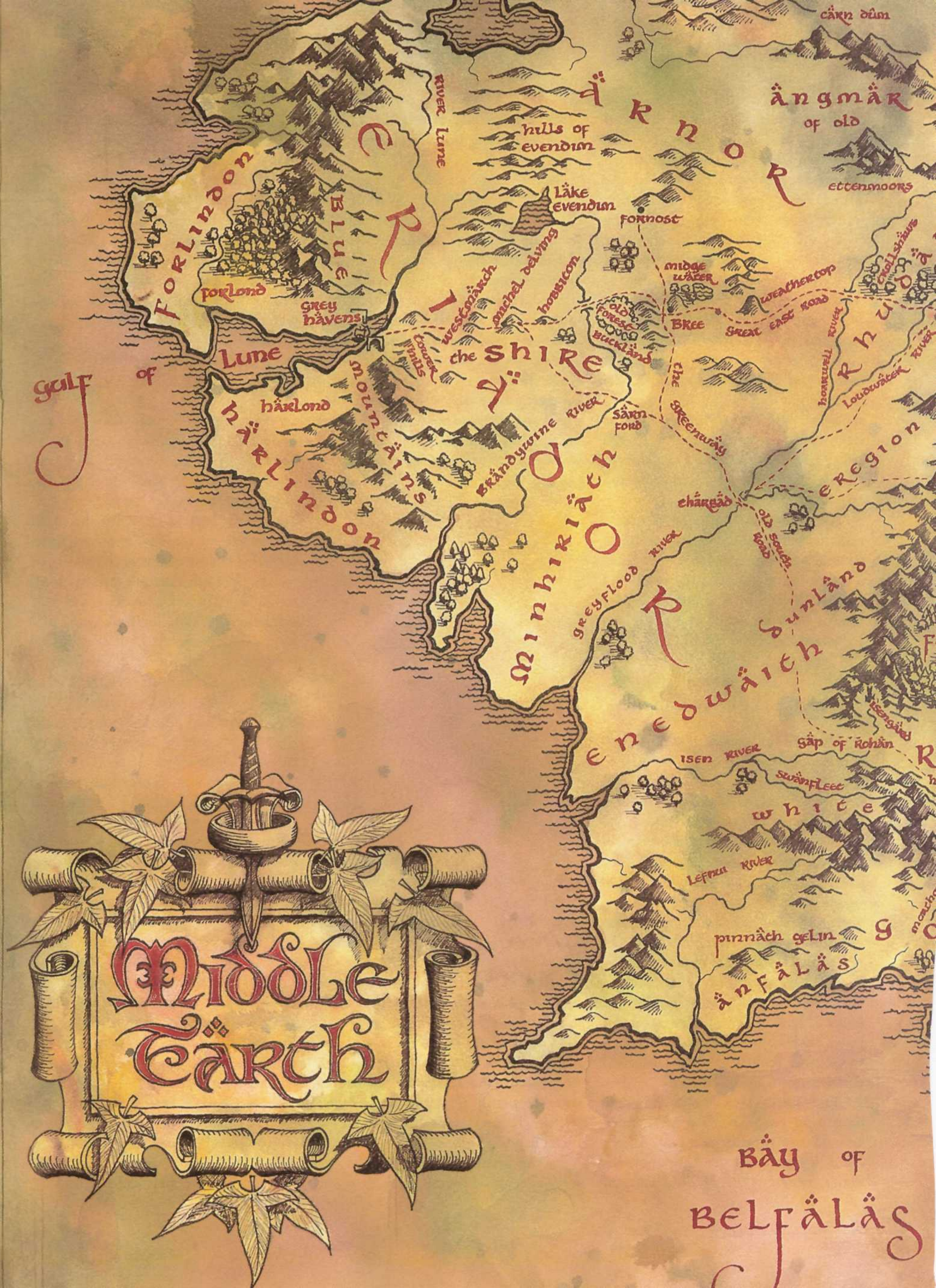
A general term for all regions east of Wilderland, Rhûn is home to the Easterlings, fierce Men of—at best—distant relation to the Edain. They have formed many great tribes, kingdoms, and realms in the wide plains and hills, along the steppes and tundra to the north, or in the mountains, forests, and swamps. They have long been allied with or influenced by Sauron, and so are foes of Gondor and the West. Those of the Elves and Dwarves who dwell within Rhûn learned long ago to hide from them, or became allies with the gentler eastern peoples, or were corrupted themselves.

Stirred up by Sauron, the Easterlings have attacked Gondor many times, often coming near to overthrowing it. Thousands of them fought in the War of the Ring. After the Dark Lord's destruction, they either surrendered or fled back east. Those Easterlings who most willingly participated in Sauron's empire resist Elessar for several decades, but others gladly escape their servitude.

DORWINION

A pleasant, fertile land on the eastern edge of Wilderland and western edge of Rhûn, Dorwinion ('Land of Wine') enjoys great fame for its premier vintages. Its people are kin both to the Men of Esgaroth and Dale and to the Easterlings, and they have picked up many exotic words and customs through intermarriage and trade. The Wood-elves in particular value the wines of Dorwinion, and the Lake-men maintain a brisk trade between the vintners of Dorwinion and King Thranduil's people. What little peaceful contact the folk of Rhovanion and the West have with the East comes almost entirely through Dorwinion.

Dorwinion is rolling hill-country with many small streams, forests, and river-valleys, steeper to the south and flatter to the north. The climate is mild, partly due to the proximity of the Sea of Rhûn—a great freshwater lake over a hundred miles across at its narrowest point. Many of Dorwinion's folk live on great estates, each of which is in effect a vast vineyard or community of smaller vineyards. Others maintain small farms or ranches, while some few live right on the coast of the Sea (or on boats) and thrive through fishing or trade. Grape-harvesting and winemaking festivals dominate their calendar, and a few of Dorwinion's folk are said to be great travellers, always searching for new techniques of glass-blowing or winemaking or for new markets for their wares.

cârn dûm
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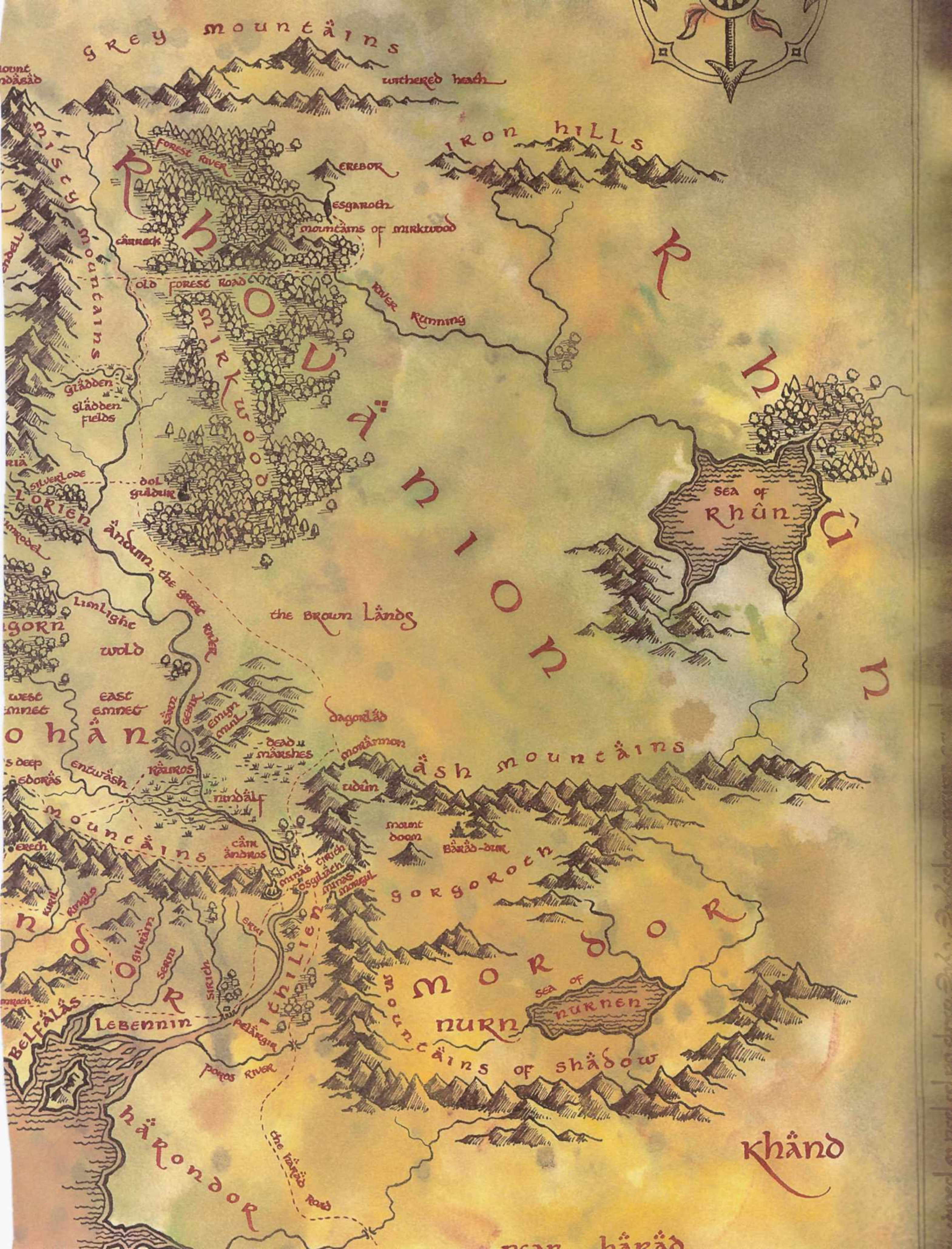
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Minas Morgul
Gorgoroth
Kiril
Ringlo
Gilrain
Serni
Sirith
Erui
Ithilien
Mordor
ndor
Sea of Nurnen
Nurn
mrach
Belfalas
Lebennin
Pelargir
Mountains of Shadow
Poros River
Harondor
The Harad Road
Khând
Near Harad

CREATING A HERO

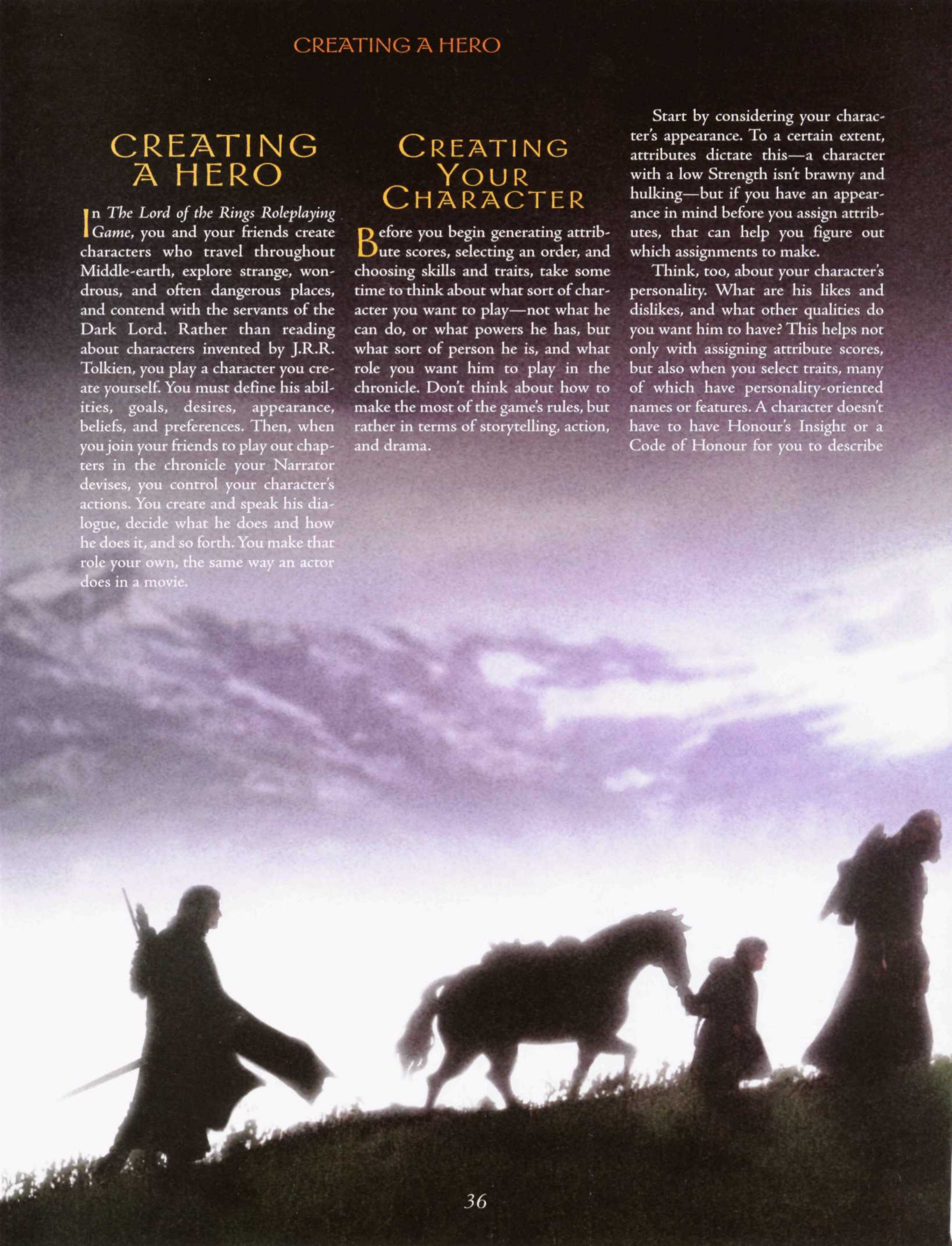
In *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*, you and your friends create characters who travel throughout Middle-earth, explore strange, wondrous, and often dangerous places, and contend with the servants of the Dark Lord. Rather than reading about characters invented by J.R.R. Tolkien, you play a character you create yourself. You must define his abilities, goals, desires, appearance, beliefs, and preferences. Then, when you join your friends to play out chapters in the chronicle your Narrator devises, you control your character's actions. You create and speak his dialogue, decide what he does and how he does it, and so forth. You make that role your own, the same way an actor does in a movie.

Creating Your Character

Before you begin generating attribute scores, selecting an order, and choosing skills and traits, take some time to think about what sort of character you want to play—not what he can do, or what powers he has, but what sort of person he is, and what role you want him to play in the chronicle. Don't think about how to make the most of the game's rules, but rather in terms of storytelling, action, and drama.

Start by considering your character's appearance. To a certain extent, attributes dictate this—a character with a low Strength isn't brawny and hulking—but if you have an appearance in mind before you assign attributes, that can help you figure out which assignments to make.

Think, too, about your character's personality. What are his likes and dislikes, and what other qualities do you want him to have? This helps not only with assigning attribute scores, but also when you select traits, many of which have personality-oriented names or features. A character doesn't have to have Honour's Insight or a Code of Honour for you to describe



him as 'honourable,' of course, but it often helps make the hero more realistic if his personality and his traits match.

What flaws does your character have? Most of the heroes we admire in literature and film suffer from some disadvantages or complications. These range from the physical (a lame leg, blindness), to the social (stubbornness, unrequited love), to the spiritual (cowardice, corruption). It is in overcoming these weaknesses, as Boromir did when he finally rejected the lure of the Ring, that a character truly shows his heroic nature.

Next, step beyond the character and consider what his goals are and, thus to a large extent, what role he plays in the chronicle's overall story. Great heroes have great, heroic goals, be they external (to journey to Mordor and destroy the One Ring) or personal (to reclaim your long-lost kingdom and wed the woman you love). Once you know your character's goals, make sure he goes after them! Nothing drives a story so well as a character who stops at nothing to achieve that which is right, or who must make hard choices about his goal in the face of conflicting needs, as Aragorn did after the breaking of the Fellowship. Many obstacles, including your character's own weaknesses, may undoubtedly confront your hero on his life's quest. In triumphing over them, he helps to craft the story your group tells.

CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

The following pages contain a variety of sample characters. If you don't care to come up with a character of your own at the moment, feel free to pick one of these to play with. You can change the name and background a bit, if you like, or leave them as they are. Then you're ready to play.

MENELCAR

Race: Man (Dúnadan)

Racial Abilities: Adaptable (+2 to Swiftness), Dominion of Man, Skilled

Attributes: Bearing 9 (+1), Nimbleness 7 (±0), Perception 5 (±0), Strength 10 (+2)*, Vitality 8 (+1)*, Wits 6 (±0)

Reactions: Stamina +2*, Swiftness +2, Willpower +1, Wisdom +1

Order: Warrior

Order Abilities: Swift Strike

Advancements: 0

Skills: Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword) +6, Healing (Treat Wounds) +1, Inspire +2, Intimidate (Majesty) +3, Language: Quenya +1, Language: Sindarin +1, Language: Westron (Common) +3, Lore: History (Gondor) +5, Lore: Realm (Gondor) +4, Lore: Heraldry +4, Observe (Spot) +2, Ranged Combat: Bows (Longbow) +3, Ride (Horse) +3, Sea-craft (Sailing) +1, Siegecraft (Catapult) +2, Survival (Forest) +3, Swim +2, Weather-sense +1

Edges: Bold, Favour of Fortune, Strong-willed

Flaws: None

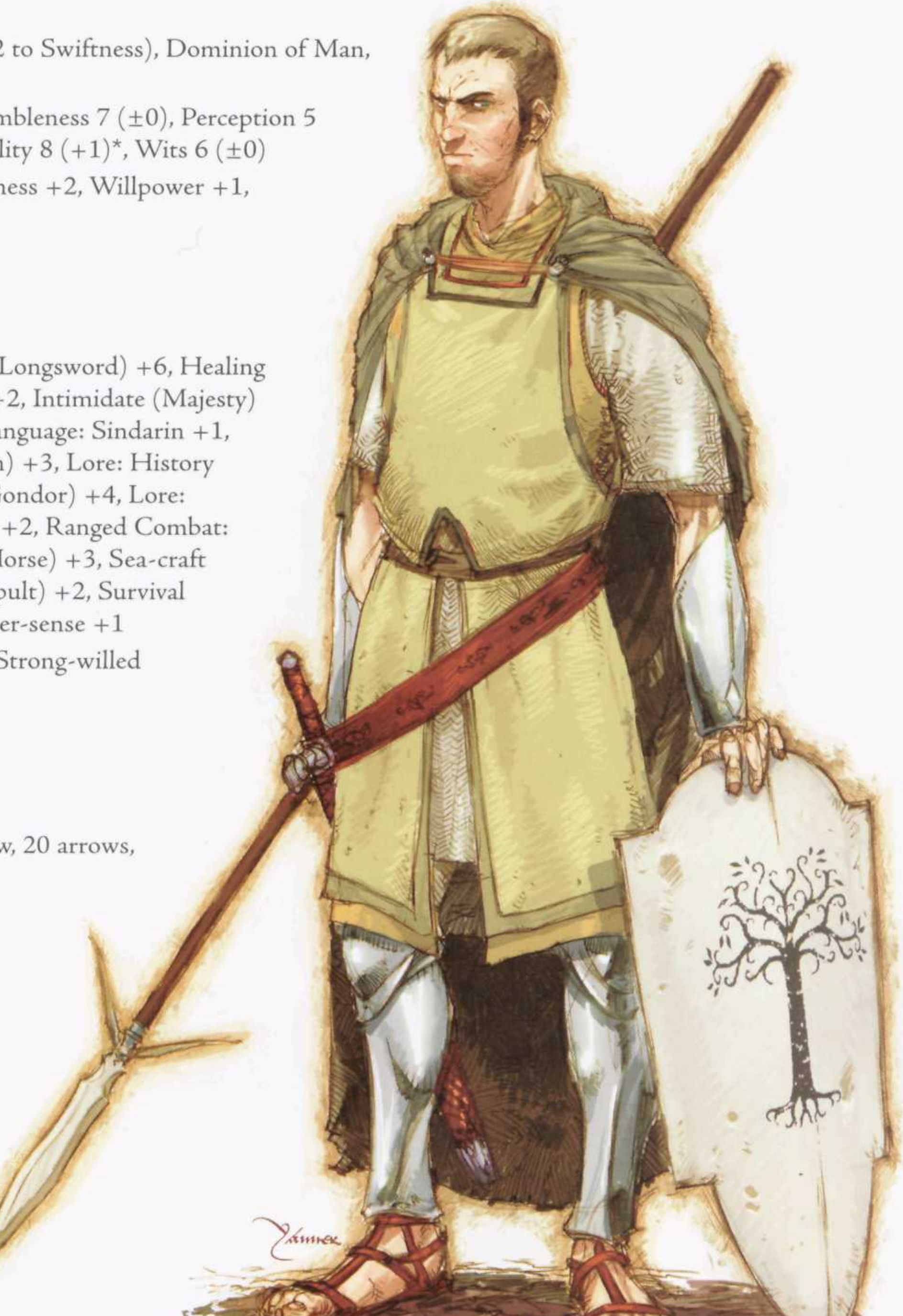
Health: 10

Courage: 4

Renown: 0

Gear: Longsword, spear, longbow, 20 arrows, chainmail, large shield, horse

*: Favoured attribute or reaction



Raised on the coast of Gondor, near Dol Amroth, Menelcar wanted to be a man of arms since the first time he saw the Prince's knights riding past in the morning sunlight. Under the tutelage of a friendly noble, who saw something noteworthy in the determined young man, Menelcar trained for many long years, honing the skills that would one day allow him to fight on behalf of Gondor. He hopes one day to display the skill and honour necessary to become one of the knights of Dol Amroth.

GRÓR

RACE: Dwarf

RACIAL ABILITIES: Animal Aversion, Craftsmanship, *Firestarting, Hardness of Body, Hardness of Mind, Healthy*

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 9 (+1), Nimbleness 9 (+1), Perception 6 (±0), Strength 13 (+3)*, Vitality 9 (+1)*, Wits 7 (±0)

REACTIONS: Stamina +3*, Swiftness +1, Willpower ±0, Wisdom +1

ORDER: Warrior

ORDER ABILITIES: Evasion

ADVANCEMENTS: *0*

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Axes (Battle Axe) +6, Climb +1, Craft: Toymaking +2, Healing (Herbal Remedies) +2, Inspire +1, Intimidate (Majesty) +3, Language: Khuzdul +4, Language: Westron (Common) +2, Lore: History (Dwarves) +4, Lore: Realm (Erebor) +2, Observe (Spot) +2, Ranged Combat: Bows (Shortbow) +3, Siegecraft (Ballista) +2, *Smithcraft* (Weaponsmith) +3, Track (Orcs) +1

EDGES: Warrior's Heart

FLAWS: None

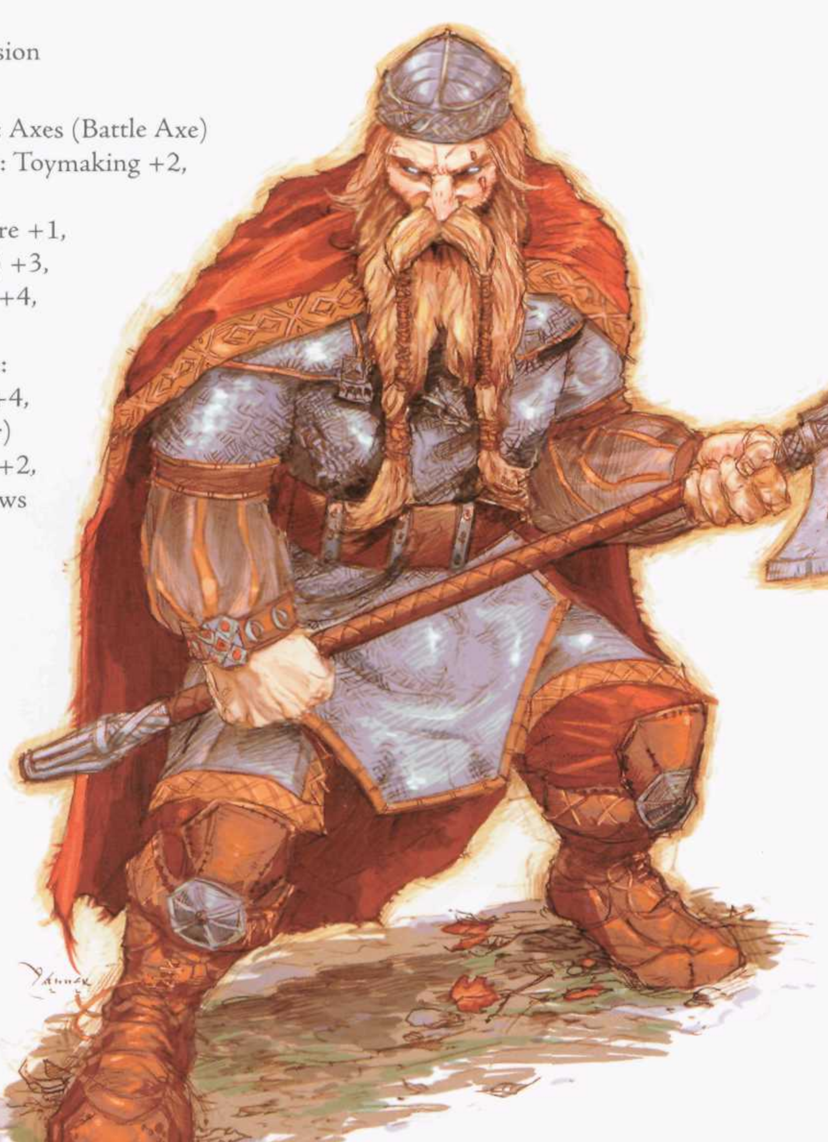
HEALTH: 12

COURAGE: 3

RENOWN: 0

GEAR: Battle-axe, chainmail, trail rations

*: Favoured attribute or reaction



A Dwarf of the Blue Mountains, Grór spent his early days at his father's side, learning the secrets of smithcraft and the forging of weapons. But the life of hammer and anvil did not hold as much attraction for Grór as the life of axe and shield, and so he soon turned to the practice of arms. Today he is a stout Dwarf warrior, battle-axe in hand and a look of grim determination on his face, ready to protect his people against Orcs and other enemies—and perhaps have a few adventures and find great treasures in the process.

CELEBETH

RACE: Elf (Sindar)

RACIAL ABILITIES: The Art, Beast-skill, Comfort, Elven Form, Elven-sense, Elven-sleep, Farsightedness, Ghost-scorn, Lightfootedness, Musical Gifts, Swift Healing

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 8 (+1), Nimbleness 12 (+3)*, Perception 11 (+2), Strength 9 (+1)*, Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 8 (+1)

REACTIONS: Stamina +1*, Swiftness +3, Willpower +1, Wisdom +2

ORDER: Warrior

ORDER ABILITIES: Evasion

ADVANCEMENTS: 0

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword) +4, Climb +1, Healing (Treat Wounds) +2, Jump +1, Language: Quenya +2, Language: Sindarin +5, Language: Westron (Common) +3, Lore: Race (Elves) +5, Lore: History (Elves) +5, Observe (Spot) +3, Ranged Combat: Bows (Shortbow) +6, Run +3, Siegecraft (Defence) +1, Stealth (Sneak) +1, Survival (Forest) +2, Track (Orcs) +2

EDGES: Accurate, Armour of Heroes

FLAWS: Enemy (Orcs of Mirkwood)

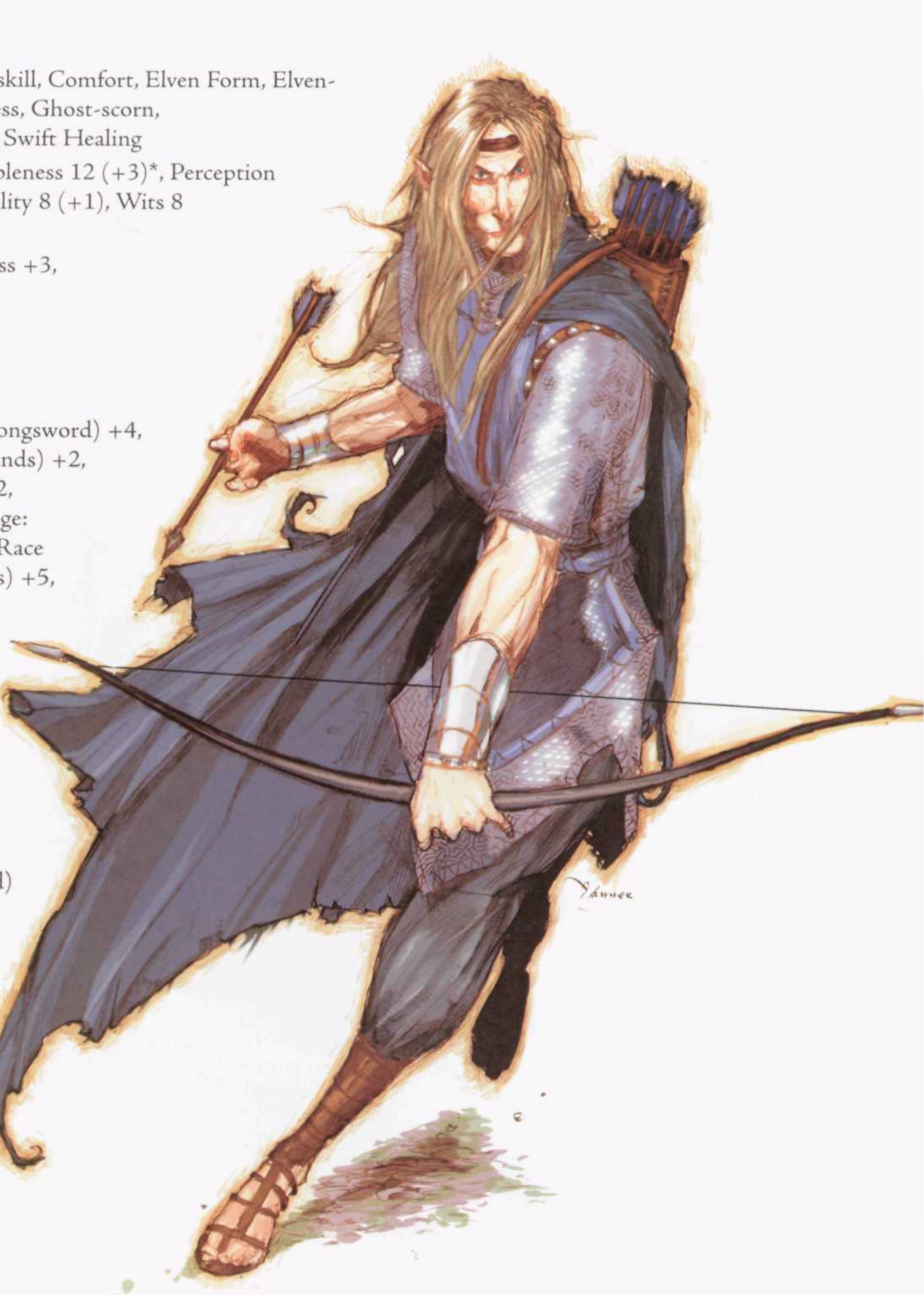
HEALTH: 9

COURAGE: 3

RENOWN: 0

GEAR: Longsword, dagger, shortbow, 30 arrows

*: Favoured attribute or reaction



An Elf of Mirkwood, Celebeth prefers a leisurely life beneath leaf and bough, and the pleasures of feast and song, to the rigours of adventuring. But Orcs, spiders, and things fouler still have come to his beloved forest, forcing him to pick up his bow and sword and fight against them. His need to protect the forest—and a certain curiosity about the rest of the world—could easily drive him out of Mirkwood and into the arms of adventure.

BROCA TOOK

RACE: Hobbit (Fallohide)

RACIAL ABILITIES: Six Meals a Day, Soft-footed, Sure at the Mark, Tough as Old Tree-Roots

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 8 (+1), Nimbleness 12 (+3)*, Perception 10 (+2)*, *Strength 5 (±0), Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 8 (+1)*

REACTIONS: Stamina +1, Swiftness +3*, Willpower +1, Wisdom +1

ORDER: Rogue

ORDER ABILITIES: Lockpicking

ADVANCEMENTS: 0

SKILLS: Acrobatics (Balance) +2, Appraise (Gold) +3, Armed Combat: Blades (Dagger) +2, Climb +3, Craft: Cooking +3, Craft: Woodcarving +1, Debate (Bargain) +1, Jump +1, Language: Westron (Common) +5, Legerdemain (Pick Pocket) +1, Lore: History (Hobbits) +5, Lore: Race (Hobbits) +6, Lore: Realm (the Shire) +5, Observe (Spot) +2, Persuade (Fast Talk) +1, Ranged Combat: Thrown Weapons (Dagger) +2, Search +2, Stealth (Sneak) +5, Survival (Hills) +1

EDGES: Dodge, Hoard 1

FLAWS: None

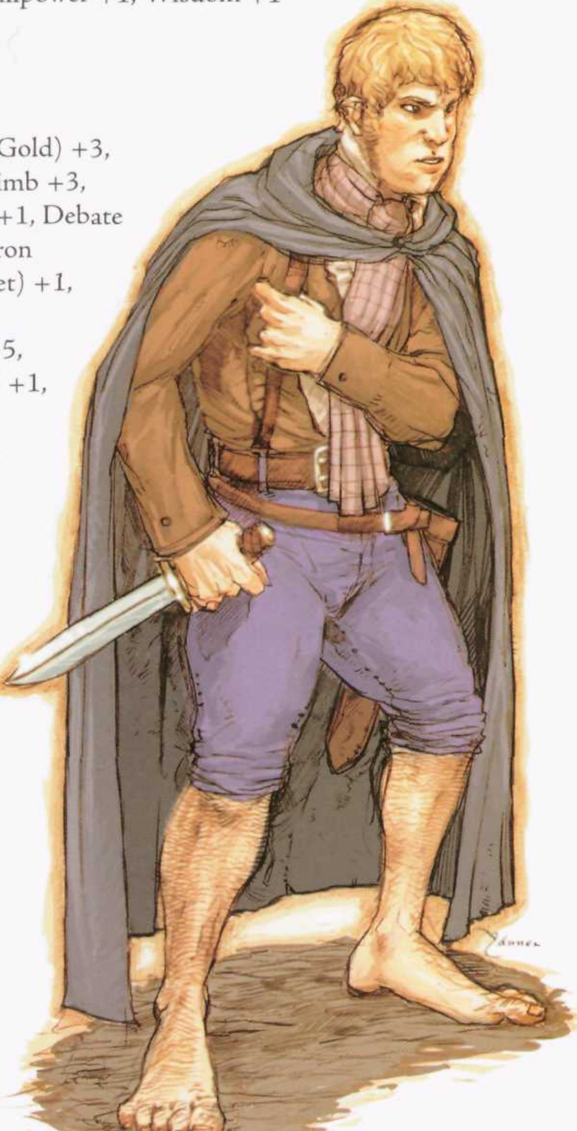
HEALTH: 8

COURAGE: 3

RENOWN: 0

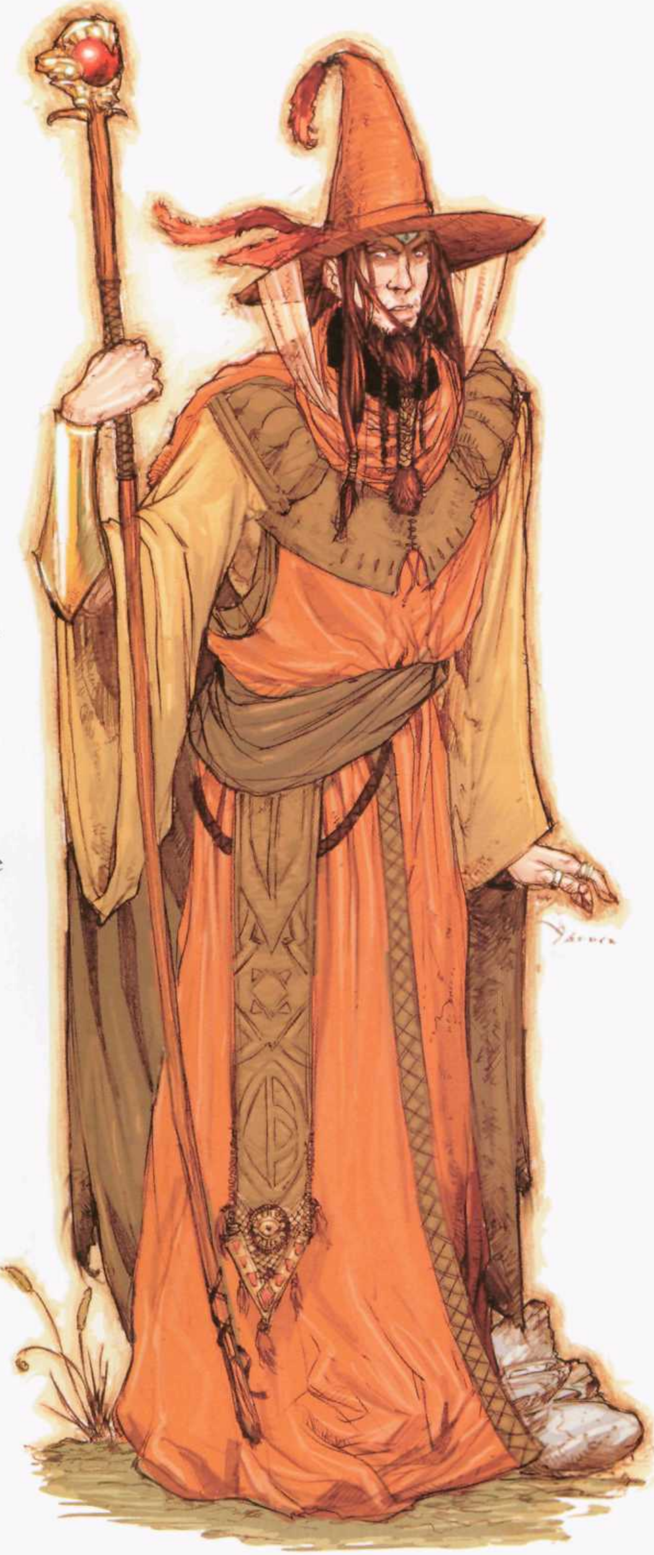
GEAR: Daggers (3), leather armour, thieves' tools

*: Favoured attribute or reaction



More restless and adventuresome than most of his kin, Broca Took began to travel outside the Shire soon after coming of age. Finding himself involved—quite innocently as he would hasten to assure you—in one scrape after another, he soon developed the skills needed to survive—and perhaps profit a little—in a world all too often cold and unfriendly. But despite his chosen trade of burglar, he is kind-hearted and sympathetic, always ready to use his talents to protect innocent folk from evil or strike a blow to make the world a safer place. And if he happens to pocket a few coins in the process, so much the better.

BELENGOL



RACE: Man (Dúnadan)

RACIAL ABILITIES: Adaptable (+2 to Swiftness), Dominion of Man, Skilled

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 12 (+3)*, Nimbleness 7 (±0), Perception 7 (±0), Strength 6 (±0), Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 12 (+3)*

REACTIONS: Stamina +1, Swiftness +2, Willpower +3*, Wisdom +3

ORDER: Magician

> **ORDER ABILITIES:** Spellcasting 1
>
> **SPELLS:** Create Light, Kindle Fire, Lightning, Opening-spell, Quench Fire
>
> **ADVANCEMENTS:** 0

SKILLS: Debate (Parley) +1, Games (Riddles) +1, Healing (Treat Illness) +1, Inquire (Converse) +1, Inspire +4, Intimidate +5, Language: Orkish (northern dialect) +1, Language: Quenya +3, Language: Rohiric +1, Language: Sindarin +3, Language: Westron (Common) +5, Lore: Magic +3, Lore: History (Dwarves, Elves, Men) +5, Lore: Race (Dwarves, Elves, Men) +5, Lore: Realm (Eriador, Gondor, Rhovanion) +5, Lore: Rings of Power +1, Observe (Spot) +2, Persuade (Oratory) +1, Run +2, Stealth (Hide) +2, Weather-sense +1

EDGES: Armour of Heroes, Strong-willed, Tireless, Valiant

FLAWS: Arrogant

HEALTH: 8

COURAGE: 4

RENOWN: 0

GEAR: Staff, robes, dagger

*: Favoured attribute or reaction

A Dúnadan of Eriador, Belengol lacked the strength of body to become a Ranger and so turned instead to the study of arcane lore and ancient tomes. Noble-hearted and as valiant as any warrior, he has studied with both Gandalf and Radagast, and he hopes one day to become a wizard after showing how he can use his spells and skills to fight the Shadow.

TARTHALION

Race: Man (Middle Man)

Racial Abilities: Adaptable (+2 to Swiftness), Dominion of Man, Skilled

Attributes: Bearing 11 (+2)*, Nimbleness 10 (+2), Perception 5 (±0), Strength 12 (+3)*, Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 6 (±0)

Reactions: Stamina +3, Swiftness +4, Willpower +2*, Wisdom +2

Order: *Noble*

Order Abilities: Deference

Advancements: 0

Skills: Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword) +6, Debate (Parley) +2, Craft: Painting +1, Inspire +4, Intimidate +4, Language: Sindarin +1, Language: Westron (Common) +5, Lore: History (Gondor) +5, Lore: Race (Men) +3, Lore: Realm (Gondor) +4, Observe (Spot) +2, Persuade (Charm) +1, Ranged Combat: Bows (Longbow) +2, Ride (Horse) +2, Run +1

Edges: Rank 1, Stern

Flaws: Duty (to lead his people well)

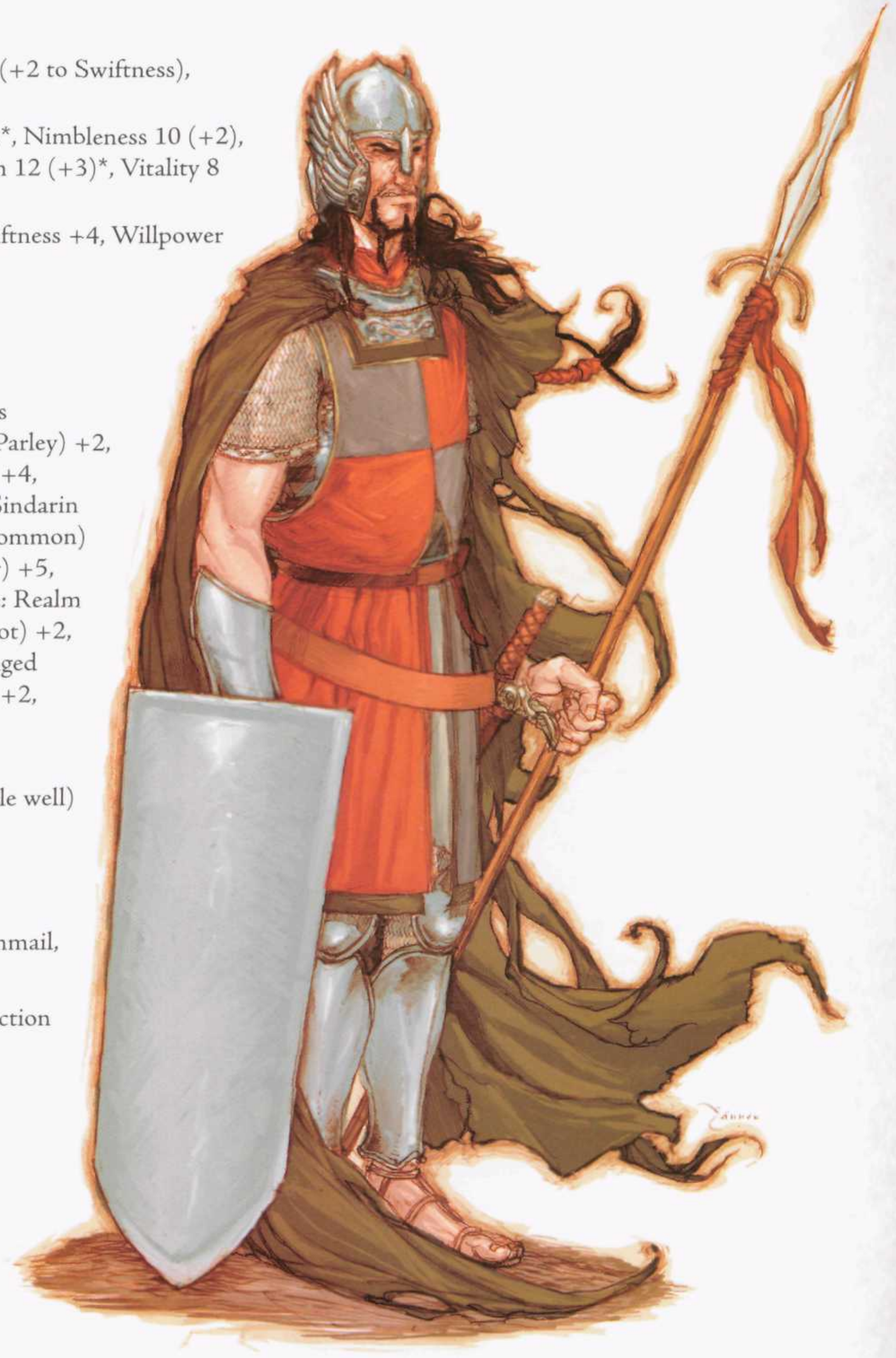
Health:11

Courage:4

Renown: *0*

Gear: Longsword, spear, chainmail, large shield, horse

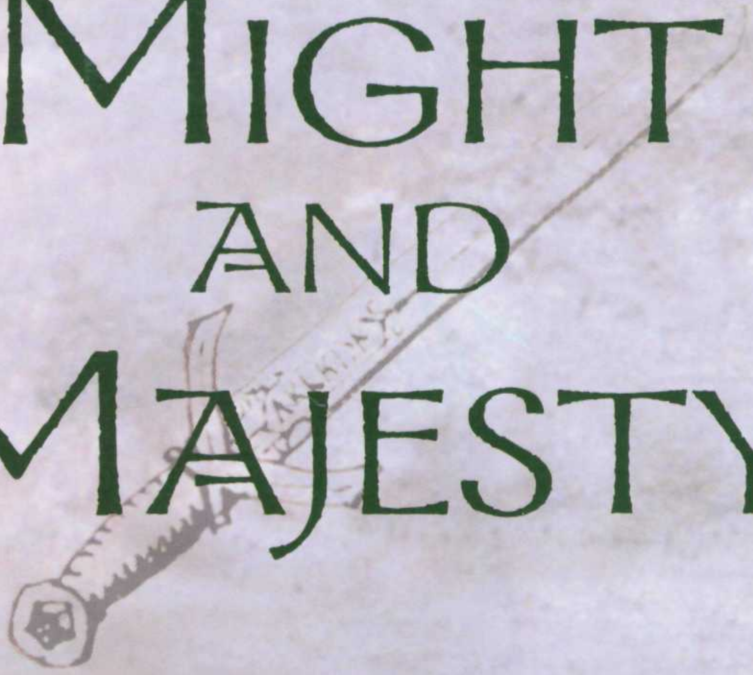
*: Favoured attribute or reaction



The fourth son of a noble of Gondor, Tarthalion has always enjoyed a life of relative ease. Not content to spend his days in idleness, he pushed himself to learn the arts of the warrior, becoming a fine horseman in the process as well. Though ready and willing to help rule his people if need calls him to it, in his heart he yearns for the wonders of adventure and the glory of battle against the Shadow.

Chapter Two

MIGHT AND MAJESTY



' "Well," said Boromir, "when heads are at a loss bodies must serve, as we say in my country." '
— The Fellowship of the Ring

The first thing to determine about your character is his *attribute* scores. Attributes represent a character's innate capabilities and characteristics: how strong, swift, smart, hale, wise, and perceptive he is.

* * *

ATTRIBUTES

Each attribute has a score that ranges from 2 (miserably weak) to 12 (amazing), though the wise and mighty of Middle-earth sometimes have scores higher still. For example, race adjustments—noted in each race's description in Chapter Three—can increase or decrease an attribute beyond these standard ranges.

Your maximum starting score in any attribute is 12 plus the adjustment for your race. A Fallohide Hobbit, for example, has a maximum starting Nimbleness and Perception of 13, and a maximum starting Strength of 11. Your minimum starting score in any attribute is 1, regardless of any race penalties.

GENERATING YOUR ATTRIBUTES

You can generate your character's primary attributes in one of two ways: the random method or the pick method. Generally, picking tends to create more balanced characters, while the random method can give you unusual highs and lows. However, both ways create characters of heroic stature, far more gifted than the average denizen of Middle-earth.

With either method, your choice of race can alter your scores in some attributes. This may affect which score you assign to each attribute. See Chapter Three for more information.

Attributes

RANDOM METHOD

To randomly determine your attributes, roll 2d6 nine times. Then pick the six highest totals and assign them to the attributes you choose. For example, suppose your nine rolls were 2, 4, 5, 5, 6, 7, 9, 9, and 11. You discard the three lowest—2, 4, and one of the 5s—and keep the others. If you want to play a warrior, you might put the 11 in Strength, one 9 in Vitality, and the other 9 in Bearing or Nimbleness. If you want to play a character with great presence, you might put the 11 in Bearing instead. After you assign your attributes, use the guidelines in Chapter Four to choose two *favoured attributes*.

PICK METHOD

To use the pick method, assign the following scores to your attributes as you choose: 10, 9, 7, 7, 5, and 4. Then distribute 8 more points among your scores. Each point increases an attribute score by 1. You cannot subtract points from one attribute and add them to another, and you cannot use points to raise a score above 12.

For example, to build the warrior described above, perhaps you'd put the 10 in Strength, 9 in Vitality, 7 in Nimbleness, 7 in Bearing, 5 in Perception, and 4 in Wits. Then you'd use 2 free points to increase the hero's Strength to 12, 2 points each to improve Vitality and Nimbleness, and the remaining 2 points to increase your Wits. After you pick your attributes, use the guidelines in Chapter Four to choose two favoured attributes.

ATTRIBUTE MODIFIERS

Each attribute provides an *attribute modifier* (listed in the table on page 48), ranging from −3 to +3, or sometimes higher. These modifiers add to skill and attribute tests whenever you attempt an action related to an attribute.

For example, the Bows skill depends on Nimbleness, so whenever you make a test to see if you hit an Orc with an arrow, you add your Nimbleness modifier. Attribute modifiers also provide the starting scores for your reactions (see page 48).

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

BEARING (BRG)

'So great a power and royalty was revealed in Aragorn...that many of the wild men paused...and some looked up doubtfully at the sky.'
— The Two Towers

The majesty of Aragorn and Denethor. The power of Gandalf and the Witch-king. The presence of Elrond and Galadriel. All of these are examples of Bearing.

Bearing represents your hero's force of personality, his presence, and his ability to inspire such feelings as awe, obedience, fear, and respect in others. As such, it's one of the most important attributes, since it reflects a quality most heroes possess. A true hero has confidence in himself and the righteousness of his quest. That confidence shines through when he encounters those who would hinder or oppose him. Even characters like Samwise and Pippin proved themselves possessed of great Bearing when necessary. But the chief servants of the Enemy, mighty in power and terror, have great Bearing too.

In the game, Bearing affects:

- Skill tests with Inquire, Inspire, Intimidate, Mimicry, Perform, Persuade, and Ride.
- The power or effect of many spells.

You can judge the strength of another person's Bearing, based on how he conducts and comports himself. This requires a TN 5 Insight or Observe (Spot) test. A marginal success tells you his Bearing score within 3 points, a complete success reveals the number within 2 points, a superior success comes within 1 point, and an extraordinary success gives you the exact tally. A failure leads you to misgauge the subject's Bearing to a like degree, in whichever way is most disadvantageous to you.

People may, if they wish, conceal their Bearing. This allows them to travel in false guise, pass unnoticed, and lull their enemies into a false sense of safety. If you wish to do this, voluntarily reduce your Bearing to the desired total and inform the Narrator. As long as your Bearing remains at the reduced score, you use the modifier for that score. Other people can obtain at least some glimmer of your true Bearing by making an opposed test, pitting their Search against your normal Bearing. You may at any time drop your concealment and reveal your full, true Bearing, possibly obtaining a bonus to appropriate skill tests for doing so.

NIMBLENESS (NIM)

'Diving under Aragorn's blow with the speed of a striking snake he charged into the Company and thrust with his spear straight at Frodo.'

— The Fellowship of the Ring

The agility and grace of the Elves. The finesse and dexterity of a Hobbit burglar. The swiftness in battle of a Rohiric knight. All these are examples of Nimbleness.

Nimbleness represents your coordination, dexterousness, and deftness. You use Nimbleness to do delicate work, swing on ropes, and move with stealth. Skilled warriors and archers like Legolas and Éomer, and wily rogues such as Bilbo, tend to have high Nimbleness. Large, clumsy folk like some Orcs and Trolls have low Nimbleness.

In game terms, Nimbleness affects:

- **Accuracy:** Nimbleness governs your ability to hit targets in battle with Armed Combat and Ranged Combat skills.
- **Initiative:** Nimbleness helps you act first in combat, provided you are aware of your foes.
- Skill tests with Acrobatics, Armed Combat skills, Craft, Games, Legerdemain, Ranged Combat skills, and Stealth.

PERCEPTION (PER)

'As Frodo drew near he threw back his hood, showing a shaggy head of dark hair necked with grey, and in a pale stern face a pair of keen grey eyes.'

— The Fellowship of the Ring

The sharp eyes of Elves and Hobbits. The snuffling nose of Gollum. The keen ears of Samwise. All these are examples of Perception.

Perception represents your awareness of your surroundings, including your ability to spot that which is hidden. People whose lives depend on their ability to notice things, such as warriors and rangers, usually have high Perception scores. People who don't pay attention to what's going on around them, or who aren't very observant, have low Perception scores. You use Perception to see a rogue sneaking up on you, to eavesdrop on a conversation in the next room, or to smell the smoke from a fire.

In game terms, Perception affects:

- Skill tests with Insight, Observe, Search, Survival, and Weather-sense.

STRENGTH (STR)

'Suddenly he seized them. The strength in his long arms and shoulders was terrifying.'

— The Two Towers

The might and sturdiness of Dwarves. The powerful thews of Orcs and Trolls. The brawn of Men like Boromir and Helm Hammerhand. All these are examples of Strength.

Strength represents your musclepower, your ability to exert force with the might of your limbs. Bold warriors like Beregond and Glorfindel, and races such as Dwarves and Orcs, tend to have high Strength. Weaklings like Gríma Wormtongue have low Strength. You use Strength to lift a fallen tree that has pinned your friend to the ground, to strike heavy blows, to win arm-wrestling contests, and to smash open locked doors.

In the game, Strength affects:

- **Lifting and Carrying:** As an average burden, you can lift a number of pounds equal to your Strength times 10. You can carry up to twice that amount (Str x 20) as a heavy burden, and three times that (Str x 30) as a very heavy load. The more you carry, the more likely you are to become weary (see 'Weariness,' page 248).
- **Damage:** The damage you cause in armed and unarmed combat.
- Skill tests with Climb, Jump, Run, Smithcraft, Stonecraft, Swim, and Teamster.

VITALITY (VIT)

'"Yes," said Aragorn, "we shall all need the endurance of Dwarves."'

— The Two Towers

The endurance of the Dwarves. The toughness of Hobbits. The undying vigour of the Nazgûl. All these are examples of Vitality.

Vitality represents your hardiness, stamina, and health. Strong and sturdy people, like Dwarves or rangers, tend to have high Vitality. Weak or sickly folk have low Vitality.

In game terms, Vitality governs:

- **Resistance to Injury:** Your Vitality determines your Health (see page 49), which tells you how many wounds you can withstand.

WITS (WIT)

'He could see Faramir's face, which was now unmasked: it was stern and commanding, and a keen wit lay behind his searching glance.'

— The Two Towers

The memory of Gandalf and Denethor. The intuition of Galadriel. The reason of Elrond. All these are examples of Wits.

Wits represent your memory, capacity for clear and reasoned thought, intellect, and store of basic knowledge. The Wise prize Wits, whereas Sauron and Saruman scorn it in their servants.

In game terms, Wits governs:

- Skill tests with Appraise, Conceal, Debate, Guise, Healing, Language, Lore, Sea-craft, Siegecraft, and Track.

TABLE 2.1: ATTRIBUTE MODIFIERS

This table tells you the modifiers for your attributes. For easy reference, the character sheet has space for you to note them.

ATTRIBUTE LEVEL	MODIFIER
0–1	−3
2	−2
3	−1
4–7	±0
8–9	+1
10–11	+2
12–13	+3
14–15	+4
16–17	+5
18+	+1 for every 2 levels

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

Besides Bearing, Nimbleness, Perception, Strength, Vitality, and Wits, characters have several other attributes that define what they can do. These derive from their primary attributes in various ways.

To calculate secondary attributes, use your character's final starting attributes: the totals after you determine the base scores and apply any modifications for your character's race. You can improve secondary attributes separately with some traits or via advancement (see Chapter Eleven). But after the game begins, improvements (or decreases) to your primary attributes do not affect your secondary attributes. For example, if you start the game with Stamina +2 based on your Strength 10, and during the game your Strength drops to 6 (±0 modifier) due to a curse, your Stamina remains +2.

REACTIONS

Using your attribute modifiers, you now determine your character's reactions: secondary attributes that allow him to avoid injury, danger, and other threats. For example, dodging an arrow or sword-blow is a Swiftness reaction. Seeing through the deceptive words of a spy is a Wisdom reaction. Resisting the efforts of Saruman's torturers would be a Stamina or Willpower reaction, depending on circumstances. The Narrator decides which reaction applies in a given situation.

Each reaction—Stamina, Swiftness, Willpower, Wisdom— derives from one of two attribute modifiers, as shown on Table 2.2. Choose the highest of the two modifiers for each of the applicable attributes, then write the scores down on your character sheet as your *starting reactions*. Your character's race, order, and traits may permanently, or for limited purposes, modify your reactions. Use the guidelines in Chapter Four to choose one *favoured reaction*.

EXAMPLE: *Menelcar the Warrior has Strength 10 (+2 modifier) and Vitality 8 (+1 modifier). When determining his starting Stamina, he selects the best of these two, the +2 from Strength, and notes that on his character sheet under 'Stamina.'*

* * *

TABLE 2.2: REACTIONS

REACTION	PICK THE BEST MODIFIER FROM:
Stamina	Strength or Vitality
Swiftness	Nimbleness or Perception
Willpower	Bearing or Wits
Wisdom	Bearing or Perception

STAMINA

'"They are a remarkable race," said the
Warden, nodding his head.
"Very tough in the fibre, I deem."'
— The Return of the King

Stamina represents your toughness: your ability to withstand pain, to throw off the effects of poison or sickness, to resist great heat or cold, and so forth. The higher modifier of Strength or Vitality determines it.

SWIFTNESS

'A quick duck had saved him;
and he had felled his orc: a sturdy
thrust with his Barrow-blade.'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

Swiftness represents your speed and reflexes: your ability to avoid sword-blows and like dangers. You use it to make a reaction test to dodge your enemies' attacks, but even without that it makes you harder for a foe to strike. It also helps you keep your footing on an icy path, avert your eyes from a dragon's gaze in time, or catch a dropped object before it shatters on the floor. The higher modifier of Nimbleness or Perception determines it.

WILLPOWER

'For a moment the eyes of Denethor
glowed again as he faced Gandalf,
and Pippin felt once more the
strain between their wills...'
— The Return of the King

Willpower represents your strength of will: your ability to stave off fear and domination and to remain true to yourself and your word, regardless of the blandishments or tortures of the Enemy. You can also make Willpower tests when engaging in contests of will with other characters (see page 222). The higher modifier of Bearing or Wits determines it.

WISDOM

'"It is wisdom to recognize necessity,
when all other courses have been weighed,
though as folly it may appear to
those who cling to false hope."'
— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

Wisdom represents your common sense and, to a certain extent, insight: your ability to determine that which is true, or the best course of action, or what others feel or believe. You use it mainly to resist efforts to fool or trick you, such as the honeyed words of Saruman. The higher modifier of Bearing or Perception determines it.

DEFENCE

Defence represents your natural ability to avoid blows and weapon fire in combat. Your Defence rating equals 10 plus your Nimbleness modifier.

HEALTH

'[Boromir] was sitting with his back to a
great tree, as if resting. But Aragorn saw
that he was pierced with many black-
feathered arrows...'
— The Two Towers

Every character has a *Health* rating equal to his Vitality plus his Strength modifier. Health represents the number of Wound Points of damage a character can sustain before dropping to the next lower Wound Level. For example, Menelcar has Strength 10 (+2 modifier) and Vitality 8. Thus, he has a Health of 10 (8+2), and can withstand 10 points' worth of injuries before he loses a Wound Level. In

THE QUALITIES OF HEROES

Although your character's attributes, order, skills, and traits tell you what he can do, they don't really tell you who he is. That's not something you can quantify with numbers. You have to define it on your own, as part of creating and running a character in the wondrous world of Middle-earth.

But for *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game,* you can't just create any sort of character. You have to create one who fits the setting and embodies the qualities it sets forth as virtuous. In short, you have to create a hero.

The characteristics of the heroes of Middle-earth include:

COMPASSION

'[D]eep in his heart there was something that restrained him: he could not strike this thing lying in the dust, forlorn, ruinous, utterly wretched.'

— The Return of the King

Heroes share the feelings of others, and they have pity on even the most wicked and wretched of creatures, such as Gollum. They do not wantonly slaughter their enemies, even when it might be prudent, for to do so would violate the hero's code. Both Gandalf and Frodo spare Saruman, and though much evil might have been averted had they not, in the end both still recognize that their decision was the right one.

RESPONSIBLE FREE WILL

' "[W]ere you ten times as wise you would have no right to rule me and mine for your own profit as you desired[.]" '

— Théoden, The Two Towers

As discussed in Chapter Ten, free will is one of the most important concepts in *The Lord of the Rings.* Everyone has a choice to do good or evil, and heroes choose the good. To exert control over the will of another is one of the ultimate evils, and heroes reject it utterly, knowing that true wisdom lies in allowing each person to pick his own path.

GENEROSITY

' "[T]hen I say to you, Gimli son of Glóin, that your hands shall flow with gold, and yet over you gold shall have no dominion." '

— Galadriel, The Fellowship of the Ring

Heroes give generously, both of themselves and of their goods, as need warrants. For example, Théoden gives Shadowfax to Gandalf, prized though the great horse is, because Gandalf deserves him, needs him, and has developed a bond of friendship with him. Heroes often acquire riches and glory during their lives, but obtaining them is not their main motivation. Those who are evil and cowardly are grasping, greedy, and grudging, often seeking gold for gold's sake alone.

HONESTY AND FAIRNESS

' "I would not snare even an orc with a falsehood[.]" '

— Faramir, The Two Towers

Heroes deal with other folk honestly and fairly at all times. Though they may, like Gandalf, not reveal all they know, simply to satisfy the curiosity of others, a true hero neither avoids nor skirts the truth when the proper time comes.

HONOUR AND NOBILITY

‘“We are truth-speakers, we men of Gondor. We boast seldom, and then perform, or die in the attempt.”’

— Faramir, The Two Towers

From the highest lord of Gondor, to the lowliest Hobbit of the Shire, true heroes always display the classic qualities of nobility and honour. They abide by their word, treat others fairly and with the respect due them—regardless of station—and have that graciousness of spirit which marks the true noble.

RESTRAINT

‘“Legolas is right,” said Aragorn quietly. “We may not shoot an old man so, at unawares and unchallenged, whatever fear or doubt be on us.”’

— The Two Towers

This point was touched on earlier, but it bears repeating: Heroes in Middle-earth are not indiscriminate killers hacking down anyone who angers or threatens them, or spilling blood needlessly. They kill in battle and often accomplish great feats of arms, but that is a different thing than ruthlessly butchering anyone and anything that happens to cross their paths. They exercise restraint, slaying their foes only when they absolutely must.

SELF-SACRIFICE

‘“It must often be so, Sam, when things are in danger: some one has to give them up, lose them, so that others may keep them.”’

— Frodo, The Return of the King

Perhaps most importantly of all, the heroes of Middle-earth are self-sacrificing. They give of themselves, even unto death, to keep the world safe from the Dark Lord and his minions. Frodo, a powerless hobbit, willingly walks into Mordor on a seemingly hopeless errand because it's the right thing to do for the greater good. Aragorn puts off his own happiness for decades to help save the Free Peoples from the Shadow. Boromir sacrifices his own life to atone for his misdeeds and save two hobbits. These heroes care not for reward or glory. The accomplishment of the quest is reward enough.

VALOUR

‘“By our valour the wild folk of the East are still restrained, and the terror of Morgul kept at bay[.]”’

— Boromir, The Fellowship of the Ring

The heroes of Middle-earth possess great valour. They are brave, with the strength of will and spirit to meet the fearsome servants of the Dark Lord and stand against them. They do not shirk from danger, though it threatens their very lives.

WISDOM

‘“For even the very wise cannot see all ends.”’

— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

Heroes possess wisdom and insight. They understand their own limitations and can judge the value and truth of things fairly, rather than through the lens of their own self-interest or foolish desires. They realize, for example, that they dare not use the Ring against Sauron, though its power might allow them to defeat him.

other words, after 10 points of damage, he becomes Dazed; after 10 more, Injured; and so on. Certain traits or race abilities modify Health, and your character can improve his Health over time through experience and advancement. Calculate your character's starting Health and record it on your character sheet.

Medium-sized characters (Elves and Humans) have 5 Wound Levels. Small characters (Hobbits) have 4 Wound Levels. Although Dwarves are considered Small, they still have 5 Wound Levels because of their Stout racial ability.

WOUND LEVEL

As characters suffer damage, they progress through a number of *Wound Levels* describing their degree of injury. After Healthy (a character's normal state), the remaining Wound Levels are Dazed, Injured, Wounded, Incapacitated, and Near Death. Falling below Near Death means the character has died from sustained injuries.

Within each Wound Level, a character can withstand an amount of damage equal to his Health. Once a character has accumulated damage equal to his Health in his current Wound Level, he drops to the next Wound Level and begins accumulating damage in it. As he sustains damage and drops from one Wound Level to the next, his injuries impair his ability to perform actions, resulting in penalties that apply to all physical tests, as well as most mental tests (see pages 244-248 for more information).

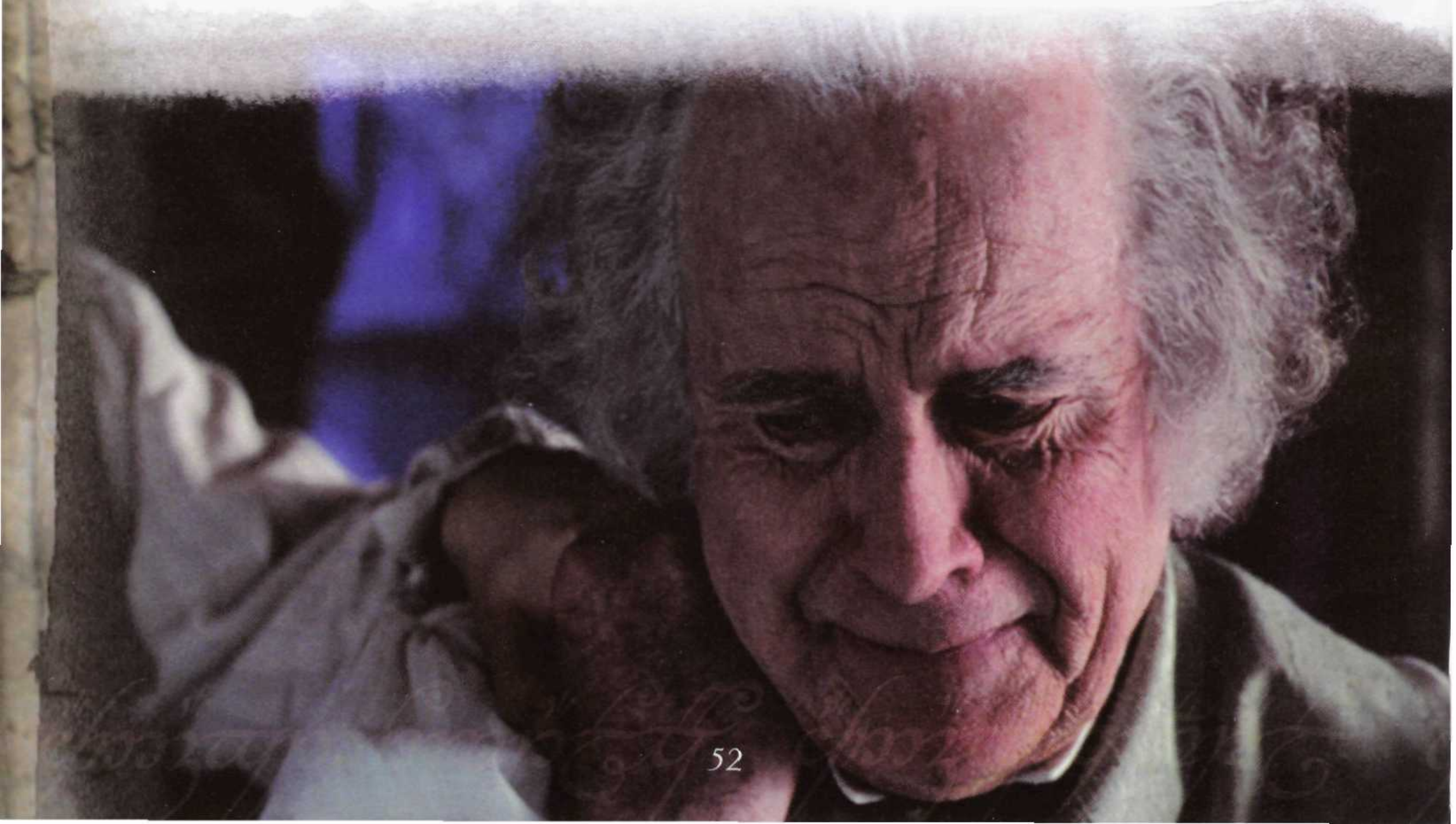
WEARINESS LEVEL

> *' "I am too weary to decide," ... "And I expect that you are all as weary as I am, or wearier. We had better halt here for what is left of the night." '*
>
> *— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring*

Your character has six Weariness Levels: Hale (fully rested), Winded, Tired, Weary, Spent, and Exhausted. If he exerts himself too much, he risks dropping to the next level, thus becoming more tired and less able to function effectively. Under certain conditions—such as travel, marching, combat, spell casting, or staying awake too long—the character must make a Stamina test to resist losing a level of Weariness. (Some traits modify a character's ability to withstand Weariness.) After becoming weary, the hero must rest to recover the lost levels so he can return to Hale. See pages 248-250 for more details on losing and regaining Weariness Levels, and the effects of becoming weary.

OTHER ATTRIBUTES

Characters have three more attributes, although these do not derive from the primary six: Courage, Renown, and Size.



COURAGE

'"Courage is found in unlikely places."'
— Gildor, The Fellowship of the Ring

Player characters in *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* are shining examples of their races and orders. Not only are they heroes of Middle-earth and often an inspiration to Free Peoples everywhere, they are the most important characters in your game. As such, they possess qualities of heroism and noble destiny that set them apart from most people. In short, they're 'special.' To represent this, they have an attribute called Courage.

Your character begins the game with 3 points of Courage. Some characters, by virtue of their race or order, begin with more. During the course of the game, a character can use his Courage to help him accomplish his objectives and even to achieve the impossible.

SPENDING COURAGE

You can spend Courage for your character in two different ways. Regardless of how much Courage he has, which way you use it, or on what tests, you cannot spend more than 4 Courage in any one round.

First, you can use Courage to improve test results. Every point of Courage spent on a test provides a +3 test result bonus. You do not have to specify in advance that you intend to use Courage to improve a test result. Instead, you can make the test, and then after seeing the results decide whether to spend Courage on it—and, if so, how many points.

Second, in some circumstances the Narrator may require you to expend 1 Courage simply to attempt an extremely difficult but useful task, such as attacking the Lord of the Nazgûl. In other words, you must pay 1 Courage as a prerequisite for making a test. In this situation, the character receives no bonus for the Courage point. Spending it just allows him to make the effort.

RECOVERING COURAGE

A character eventually regains the Courage he uses during a game. How quickly this happens depends on the circumstances and the Narrator's judgment. Some order abilities or traits may also affect Courage recovery.

If a character spends Courage in ways that improve the story or help move it along in fun and dramatic ways, or for heroic, noble, and self-sacrificing purposes appropriate to the character, he recovers the spent Courage at the end of the scene—or even, if the Narrator prefers, immediately after spending it. For example, a character who uses 2 Courage to successfully draw off a horde of Orcs so injured men can escape to safety should recover that Courage quickly. Generally, this rule also applies if a character uses Courage to keep himself from looking foolish or unheroic. It's better to spend Courage than be victimized by a low roll that makes a character look bad—and which often hinders the story.

On the other hand, if a character uses Courage to show off, for personal gain, or for other unheroic, ignoble, or selfish purposes, he does not recover it until the next game session, or for a long period in-game (days or weeks). Courage isn't intended to allow a character to seem tough and strong, but to ensure that he can perform heroic and dramatically appropriate actions.

COURAGE FOR OTHER CHARACTERS

Only the most important characters in your chronicle should have Courage. Obviously this means the player characters, but it also includes important NPCs, such as major antagonists. On the other hand, the average NPC, including low-level opposition like your average Orc, usually has no Courage at all.

RENOWN

' "Yet I do not bid you flee from peril, but to ride to battle where your sword may win renown and victory." '
— Éowyn, The Return of the King

The heroes of *The Lord of the Rings*, particularly lead characters like the player characters in your chronicle, are usually larger than life, with qualities to match. These qualities and the accomplishments they allow cause characters to become well known, to develop a reputation throughout Middle-earth. *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* represents this fame (or notoriety) with an attribute called Renown. Generally, the higher a character's Renown, the better known and more recognizable he is. Other folk, including NPCs he encounters, may have heard of him and know something about him.

ACQUIRING RENOWN

Renown uses the same scale as primary attributes, but it has no upper limit. A character could have a Renown of 20, 30, or more, though for most characters Renown 12 is high. All characters start the game with Renown 0—no one really knows who they are yet—unless the Narrator rules otherwise for purposes related to a particular chronicle. If, for instance, the Narrator wanted to run a game in which all of the heroes are royalty, she might have them each start out with Renown 5 or higher.

Characters develop their Renown through game play, either with advancement picks or as direct awards. See 'Renown Awards,' page 281.

USING RENOWN

Renown has two uses in the game. It lets you determine whether one character knows another; and it modifies the use of some social skills.

Recognition Tests

First, Renown allows a character to make a *recognition test* to find out if he has heard of another character—and, if so, what he knows about him. The TN for the test depends on the size of the region or society the two characters have in common, as shown on the Recognition Tests Table.

Recognition tests are usually Wits tests. However, if a character has an appropriate Lore skill (such as Lore: Race (Elves) when determining who Glorfindel is), the Narrator may allow him to use that instead. Similarly, if the two characters share a common order, the Narrator may let them to use an appropriate skill for their recognition tests.

Regardless of the attribute or skill used, the Renown modifier (see the table) for the target character modifies the test results. For example, if

TABLE 2.3: RECOGNITION TESTS

BASE DIFFICULTY

DIFFICULTY	REGION/SOCIETY
TN 5	**LOCAL:** within Hobbiton, within Minas Tirith
TN 10	**AREA:** within the Southfarthing, within Dol Amroth
TN 15	**REGION:** within the Shire, within Enedwaith, within Eastfold
TN 20	**REALM:** within Eriador, within Gondor, within Rohan
TN 25	**WORLD:** within Middle-earth

RECOGNITION MODIFIERS

SITUATION	TEST MODIFIER
Target of same race	±0
Target of friendly/allied race	−1
Target of hostile race	−2
Target of same order	+1
Target of same elite order	+2

RENOWN MODIFIERS

RENOWN*	TEST MODIFIER
Renown 1–5	±0
Renown 6–10	±1
Renown 11–15	±2
Renown 16–20	±3
Renown 21–25	±4
Renown 26–30	±5

* Renown modifiers can be applied both negatively and positively, depending on the situation. With recognition tests, though, these are always applied positively. A character trying to recognize someone with a high Renown uses that person's positive Renown modifier to increase his die roll, making it easier to succeed.

Menelcar tries to determine who Glorfindel (Renown 16) is, he applies a +3 modifier to the test result because Glorfindel is so renowned.

If a recognition test fails, the character hasn't heard of the other person or cannot remember anything he might have learned about him. If the test succeeds, the character does know of him. The greater the degree of success, the more he knows. Typically, a character knows an NPC (or vice-versa) based on his traits or because of specific famous deeds he has accomplished.

EXAMPLE: *After many adventures, Menelcar earns a Renown of 8. While in Minas Tirith, he encounters a Gondorian lord from Dol Amroth. Ordinarily the lord would use his Wits to make a recognition test to find out what he knows about Menelcar, but since they're both from Gondor, the Narrator decides to let him use his Lore: Realm (Gondor) +6 skill. The lord rolls an 8, for a test result of (8 + 6 [skill ranks] + 1 [Wits modifier] + 1 [Menelcar's Renown modifier] + 1 [target of the same order]=) 17. Since they are both from Dol Amroth, the TN is 10. The lord's test achieves a superior success. He has heard of Menelcar and knows him not only for his bravery and skill in battle, but also for his strong will (from his Strong-willed edge). Since the lord understands the rigours of war from his own experiences, he reacts well to Menelcar.*

Renown and Social Skills

The modifiers listed on the Renown Modifiers Table can also apply to some uses of social skills and some Bearing tests. How it applies, and whether it acts as a bonus or a penalty, depends on the situation.

When appropriate, have a character make a recognition test to determine if he knows someone. If he succeeds, the recognized person may apply his Renown modifier to the use of social skills on that character. If the person is known for something the character considers positive, beneficial, or admirable, the Renown modifier is a bonus. If he's known for something negative, despicable, wicked, or hurtful, the Renown modifier is a penalty.

EXAMPLE: *In the above example, if Menelcar tried to use his Persuade skill to convince the lord of something, his Renown modifier would act as a bonus to his test, since the lord regards him favourably. If, however, the lord were a dissipated noble who scorned soldiers and feats of arms, Menelcar's reputation as a warrior might cause his Renown modifier to act as a penalty to his test.*

SIZE

A character's Size is directly related to his race. Elves and Men are considered Medium. Dwarves and Hobbits are considered Small.

A difference in the sizes between two characters involved in a physical test—like a combat action—can cause a penalty or a bonus to the test. See 'Size' on page 219 for more details.

CHANGES TO ATTRIBUTES

During the course of the game, your character's attributes may change—sometimes temporarily, sometimes permanently. Changes for the better often represent the gaining of experience and the gradual improvement of the character. Changes for the worse usually result from the attacks of enemies or from other perils encountered, and these alterations often become challenges for the character to overcome as he progresses towards his goals.

Ways attributes may change include:

ILLNESS: A plague or fever can reduce a character's Strength, Nimbleness, and Vitality to low levels and may even affect his ability to reason (Wits).

POISON: Orcs often poison their weapons: sometimes to kill, sometimes to weaken. Most poisons characters encounter affect Nimbleness, Strength, or Vitality or any combination of the three.

MAGIC: Spells and the subtle magic of Middle-earth may alter attributes.

AGE: As characters grow older, they become physically weaker, resulting in permanent reductions to Nimbleness, Strength, and Vitality. On the other hand, their Wits and Bearing may improve.

ADVANCEMENT: Characters undergoing advancements (see Chapter Eleven) can use their picks to increase attributes.

When something alters an attribute, you calculate the attribute's modifier from its new level for as long as the change remains in effect. For example, if Menelcar temporarily loses 4 points of Strength due to a serpent's venom, until he heals from the poison he has a Strength of 6 (instead of his usual 10) and a Strength modifier of ±0 (in place of his normal +2).

The same effects apply to derived qualities such as carrying capacity or movement rates. The only exceptions are secondary attributes like reactions or Health. Even though these are initially derived from governing attributes, alterations to attributes never affect them. They can be affected directly, however.

ROLEPLAYING ATTRIBUTES

In much the same way that thinking about your character in advance can help you decide how to assign his attribute scores, you can use the attributes themselves as inspiration for how you roleplay your character. This is a particularly good way to flesh out a character concept that was vague when you started. You may come up with a few good ideas that hadn't occurred to you before!

Bearing is the most important attribute to roleplay properly. In many ways, a character's Bearing and how he expresses it does more to define him and set him apart from others than anything else. A character with high Bearing may be majestic and noble (like Aragorn), powerful and wise (like Gandalf and Elrond), sure of mind and strong of will (like Galadriel), or simply terrifying (like the Lord of the Nazgûl), but he always has a sense of self-assuredness and confidence. Characters with low Bearing tend to be shy, easily frightened, and quick to knuckle under to their 'betters.'

High *Nimbleness* often mirrors itself with a quicksilver personality and a tendency toward skills and abilities that rely on cleverness, guile, and speed instead of brute strength. A character with both high Nimbleness and Wits can make a formidable adversary, while one with low Wits may get himself into trouble again and again. Low Nimbleness may indicate that the character is big and clumsy, awkward and ungainly, or the like.

High *Perception* is a common trait among heroes, who seem to have the ability to see what others overlook. At times, they may even seem to be able to gaze into the hearts of Men. This tends to make them wise, contemplative, or sharp-witted. Low Perception, on the other hand, often indicates a character who pays little attention to things around him, or who is so obsessed with something—say, his studies of ancient lore—that he shuts everything else out.

In a world that honours fighting men and requires physical prowess to survive, characters with high *Strength*, like those of high Bearing, tend to be confident and assured—sometimes even overly proud or arrogant. Orcs display the negative side of Strength well, emphasizing it above all else and maintaining order through brutal violence and discipline. Strong characters often rely on force of arms to accomplish their goals, and they prefer direct action to roundabout plans. Weak characters, like Gríma Wormtongue, try to find ways to emphasize other abilities, perhaps even mocking or scorning muscular might.

High *Vitality* is also a hallmark of warriors, as well as some races, like the Dwarves. It often makes a character stubborn, enduring of both mind and body, and perhaps even supportive of others. Low Vitality characters are sickly and weak, preferring to avoid travel, the outdoors, and battle as much as they can.

High *Wits* indicates a character with a bright mind, one able to grasp all the complexities of a subject. He can reason his way through difficult problems, teach and guide others, or use his broad knowledge for the betterment of his people. His knowledge may make him arrogant, or disinclined to accept the slowness and ignorance of others. Low Wits may indicate a dullard, someone who's had little learning or chance to exercise his mind.

Character Creation Example: Menelcar and Grór

To illustrate the character creation process, let's follow two characters from the first dice roll.

Steve is going to run a *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* chronicle for Christian and John. Christian decides to create a man of Gondor: Menelcar. John has chosen to play a Dwarf named Grór.

Steve decides to have the players roll their attributes at random. Christian rolls and keeps 10, 8, 7, 6, 5, and 5. John rolls and keeps 11, 9, 7, 7, 6, and 4. They assign their scores as follows:

Menelcar		Grór	
Attributes	Reactions	Attribute	Reactions
Bearing 6 (±0)	Stamina +2	Bearing 9 (+1)	Stamina +2
Nimbleness 7 (±0)	Swiftness ±0	Nimbleness 7 (±0)	Swiftness ±0
Perception 5 (±0)	Willpower +1	Perception 6 (±0)	Willpower ±0
Strength 10 (+2)	Wisdom ±0	Strength 11 (+2)	Wisdom +1
Vitality 8 (+1)		Vitality 7 (±0)	
Wits 5 (±0)		Wits 4 (±0)	

Continued on page 73.

Chapter Three

THE FREE PEOPLES

' "Eldest of all, the elf-children
Dwarf the delver, dark are his houses
Ent the earthborn, old as mountains
Man the mortal, master of horses." '
— Treebeard, *The Two Towers*

When you decide to create a character for *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*, one of the first things to consider is your character's race: Dwarf, Elf, Hobbit, or Man. As an adventurer hailing from one of these Free Peoples, your character not only represents his race to other folk, but also plays an important part in the fight against the Shadow.

THE RACES

Each of the four races available for players to choose for their characters—Dwarves, Elves, Hobbits, and Men—is described in this chapter as follows:

NAME: The name of the race, possibly in more than one tongue, followed by a brief physical description.

NATURE: The typical personalities, attitudes, and physical capabilities evinced members of this race evince. If any 'sub-races'—such as High Elves and Grey Elves—exist, they are described here.

LANDS: Where members of the race dwell, both in general ('Dwarves like mountains') and specifically ('Dwarves have strongholds in the Ered Luin and Erebor'). There are also details here about how the race's customs and history, its government, and the like.

SPEECH: The language(s) members of the race commonly speak.

NAMES: A few examples of names (and naming customs) common to the race.

(RACE) OF RENOWN: A few famed members of the race, and what they are known for.

Races of Middle-earth

NATIVE LANGUAGES AND LORE

After choosing your character's race, multiply his Wits by 3 and assign the total in skill ranks to Language and Lore skills pertaining to his race. These include not only the native tongues listed in the 'Speech' description for each race, but skills related to history (Lore: History (Elves), Lore: History (Dúnedain)) or places where the character has lived (Lore: Realm (Erebor), Lore: Realm (the Shire)). These Language and Lore skill picks are in addition to the character's racial skill picks.

EXAMPLE: *Menelcar the warrior has Wits 6. His player multiplies that by 3, for a total of 18 ranks' worth of background Languages and Lore. Since Menelcar comes from Gondor, he chooses the following: Language: Westron (Common) +3, Language: Sindarin +1, Language: Quenya +1, Lore: History (Gondor) +5, Lore: Realm (Gondor) +4, Lore: Heraldry +4.*

FAVOURED ORDERS/ADVENTURERS: The order(s) favoured by most members of the race. Also the ways such people might become involved in adventures.

ADJUSTMENTS: Each race receives certain adjustments to its attributes, which are listed here. For example, Dwarves are tough, strong, and sturdy, so they receive +2 Strength and +2 Vitality.

SKILLS AND TRAITS: Characters of each race get six picks from its list of skills and traits. However, no character may begin the game with more than six ranks in any skill, regardless of where or how he learns the skill.

ABILITIES: Special abilities the race possesses, such as Elven farsightedness or Hobbit stealth.

Each race's entry also features several sample 'background packages' built with racial skills and reflecting various backgrounds or upbringings common to that race. You don't have to use these packages. You can make your six picks straight from your character's racial skill and trait list if you like, but the packages may save you some time or even give you some ideas.

THE DWARVES (Khazâd)

' "It is said that the skill of the Dwarves is in their hands rather than in their tongues," she said; "yet that is not true of Gimli." '
—Galadriel, The Fellowship of the Ring

Dwarves (or *Khazâd* in their own tongue) are a short and stocky folk, standing between four and five feet tall, by the measure of Men. Strong and hardy, they endure pain, fatigue, and suffering more readily than other races. At need, they can push themselves hard to cross rough terrain quickly or to come to grips with a foe. Their men grow thick, luxuriant beards in which they take great pride, often colouring, forking, or braiding them.

Dwarves become 'war-worthy' (able to fight and engage in hard labour) at about age 30. By 40, they have an appearance of age (by the standards of Men) that belies their vigour and strength. They live for 200 years or more, with Durin's line having the greatest longevity; a Dwarf who has seen 240 or more winters is thought old, and becomes swiftly weaker as time passes. A few Dwarves reach 300.

NATURE: Dwarves are a hardy folk, as hardy in mind as they are in body. They are stern, often stubborn and proud, and resist any attempt to dominate or sway them. They rarely forget insults or wrongs done them or their families, even over centuries, and they take the burdens of vengeance (and other obligations) placed upon them seriously. But they rarely forget a favour or kindness, either.

Dwarves have a love of craftworks—particularly the things they make by hand, and of silver, gold, and *mithril*—often scorning marriage and other pursuits to devote themselves to their craft. Other races hold them in great regard for their skill as smiths, miners, jewellery-makers, carvers, and even toy-makers. But this love of wealth and made things often turns to greed and desire. Gold holds dominion over the minds of many Dwarves.

Dwarves are secretive and protective of their privacy. They dislike others knowing their business, rarely mingle with other races, and keep to themselves most of the time—except to trade. In particular, they guard their women and children with fierce jealousy and protectiveness. In all the chronicles of the Dwarves, only one Dwarf-woman is even mentioned.

Vindictiveness, avarice, ingratitude, and foul nature have led a few Dwarves to ally themselves with the Enemy, though not so many as the tales of greedy or suspicious Men would have it. Most hold the Dark Lord and all his servants, particularly Orcs, as their direst foes.

LANDS AND LORE: Dwarves dwell in mountains and hills, delving great halls and mansions underground, where they work at their forges and build treasure-vaults to hold their wealth secure. At the end of the Third Age, they are a scattered people, many of their once-proud homes having fallen to Orcs or other evils, but they have strongholds still in the east of the Ered Luin (especially south of the Gulf of Lune), at Erebor (the Lonely Mountain), and in the Iron Hills. The greatest of their halls, Khazad-dûm—which Elves and Men call 'Moria'—remains under the shadow of Durin's Bane, which the Dwarves awoke by digging too deep for *mithril*.

The Dwarves have Seven Houses, each descended from one of the Seven Fathers, each holding one of the Seven Hoards. The oldest, wisest, and proudest is the Longbeards, or House of Durin, whose ancestral mansion was Khazad-dûm. A king rules each House, though by the time of the War of the Ring the diminishment and scattering of the Dwarves has deprived their kings, save perhaps the lord of the House of Durin, of much of their power.

After their awakening, the Dwarves slowly revealed themselves to the other peoples. They built great fortresses and became allies of the Elves in their wars against evil. Elsewhere in Middle-earth, the Dwarves allied themselves with Men, trading metals, smithwork, stonework, and other goods for food, and sometimes taking on young men as their apprentices. Many of these ties endured into the Third Age, though a long series of quarrels created enmity between the Dwarves and the Elves, and greedy Men sometimes plundered Dwarf-hoards, as did fearsome dragons. When Dwarves noticed Hobbits at all, they got along well with them, particularly with Harfoots.

Despite their oft-bitter relations with the Elves, the Dwarves reserve their greatest hatred for Orcs and Trolls, with whom they have fought long and fiercely through the ages. The most terrible of these battles was the War of the Dwarves and Orcs (TA 2793–99), which began when the Orcs slew Thrór, lord of the House of Durin, after he entered Moria. The Dwarves won that war, slaying Azog, king of the Orcs, but they dared not reclaim Khazad-dûm for fear of Durin's Bane, nor did they free their former mansion of Gundabad from Orc-hands. Not until TA 2941, when Thorin II Oakenshield and his comrades—including Bilbo the Hobbit—retook Erebor from the dragon and triumphed in the Battle of Five Armies, did the Dwarves regain something of their ancient glory. Only in the Fourth Age, when they returned at last to Khazad-dûm, would they recover that glory in full.

SPEECH: Khuzdul, a harsh-sounding language they do not teach to outsiders.

NAMES: The names Dwarves tell to others are in the languages of Men. They have secret names in their own language that they reveal to no one, not even on their tombs.

Male: Bifur, Borin, Dori, Dwalin, Farin, Fili, Frerin, Frór, Kili, Náin, Nori, Óin, Ori, Thráin, Thrór.

DWARVES OF RENOWN: As a mere stripling, Dáin II, later known as Ironfoot, slew the Orc-chieftain Azog, thus avenging his kinsman Thrór. He later became lord of the Dwarves of the Iron Hills and, after the Battle of Five Armies, the King Under the Mountain at Erebor. A wise leader and strong, Dáin II rebuilt Erebor into a great

BACKGROUND PACKAGES: DWARVES

DWARF OF BALIN'S COLONY: **Armed Combat +1, Lore: Moria +2, Stonecraft +2, Survival (Mountains) +1.**

DWARF OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS: **Armed Combat +1, Smithcraft +2, Stonecraft +2, Survival (Mountains) +1.**

DWARF OF EREBOR: **Appraise +1, Armed Combat +1, Smithcraft +2, Stonecraft +2.**

DWARF OF THE IRON HILLS: **Armed Combat +1, Ranged Combat +1, Smithcraft +2, Stonecraft +2.**

WANDERING DWARF: **Appraise +1, Armed Combat +2, Smithcraft +2, Teamster +1.**

Dwarf-stronghold and brought himself and his people great wealth. Old but still hale, he fell in the War of the Ring, during the Battle of Dale.

Balin, son of Fundin, was one of Thorin Oakenshield's companions on the quest to retake the Lonely Mountain. Discontent with life in Erebor, he led an expedition to retake Khazad-dûm, proclaiming himself Lord of Moria. He was later slain there by an Orc-arrow, and Orcs and Trolls overwhelmed and slew his people.

Gimli, son of Glóin, was a member of the Company of the Ring, and he performed many bold deeds during the War of the Ring. He formed a great friendship with Legolas of the Elves. According to the minstrels, Gimli later accompanied his Elven friend across the Sea, making him the only Dwarf ever to go there.

FAVOURED ORDERS/ADVENTURERS: Warrior, craftsman. Most Dwarves take to a life of forge and mine, creating works of great beauty or strength with their hands. But Dwarves who venture into the world outside their halls must often be stout warriors, able to defend themselves against those who would steal their treasures and to slay the enemies of their people. They favour axes, hammers, and mattocks as weapons, and they wear heavy armour they forge themselves.

ADJUSTMENTS: +2 Strength, +2 Vitality

SKILLS AND TRAITS: For a Dwarf player character, make six picks from the following skills and traits lists to begin the game: The character must also fulfil any requisites or limitations listed here. You can choose an additional trait by selecting one of the listed flaws too.

Skills: Appraise, Armed Combat, Conceal, Craft, Debate, Games, Insight, Inspire, Intimidate, Language, Lore, Observe, Perform, Persuade, Ranged Combat, Search, Siegecraft, Smithcraft, Stonecraft, Stealth, Survival, Teamster, Track, Weather-sense.

Requisite: All Dwarves must have at least two levels in any Craft skill. These come from your picks normally. They are not free.

Edges: Ally, Craftsman, Doughty, Faithful, Fell-handed, Friends, Hardy, Hoard, Incorruptible, Indomitable, Resolute, Stern, Strong-willed, Swift Recovery, Tireless, Valour, Wakefulness.

Flaws: Arrogant, Code of Honour, Duty, Grasping, Proud, Rival, Stiff-necked.

GENDER: Dwarf characters must be male.

ABILITIES: Dwarves have the following abilities:

ANIMAL AVERSION: Dwarves get along poorly with animals. They do not even keep dogs. They suffer a −2 penalty to Ride tests and other tests for dealing with animals.

CRAFTSMANSHIP: The Dwarves practice their crafts obsessively and possess many secrets of making that are unknown to other peoples. They receive a +2 bonus to Smithcraft and Stonecraft tests.

FIRESTARTING: Dwarves have great skill at starting fires, even in rainy weather. They receive a +2 bonus to all Survival tests to get a fire going.

HARDNESS OF BODY: Dwarves receive a +2 bonus to Stamina rolls to resist losing Weariness Levels.

HARDNESS OF MIND: Dwarves are strong-willed, and they steadfastly resist any efforts to control them. They receive a +2 bonus to Willpower tests to withstand Intimidate attempts and other forms of domination.

HEALTHY: Dwarves rarely fall ill. They receive a +6 bonus to Stamina tests or other tests to resist disease.

STOUT: Although Dwarves are considered Small, they still have five Wound Levels.

THE ELVES (Eldar)

' "And Elves, sir! Elves here, and Elves there! Some like kings, terrible and splendid; and some as merry as children." '
— Samwise, The Fellowship of the Ring

The oldest and wisest people of Middle-earth, the Elves possess great nobility and power. They are the only people never to have willingly served the Shadow.

Elves stand as tall as Men—taller than some—though they are of slighter build and greater grace. Their features are surpassing fair, evoking awe among the lesser peoples. Most have dark hair and eyes, though those of some houses have golden hair, and they are always beardless. Feeling no bite of cold, Elves wear light garb, often sewn with great skill. They revel in the wonders of nature, the beauty of songs and tales, the glimmer of the stars, and the voice of the waters. But in their hearts, they also possess great sadness, knowing that all things pass, and that they cannot preserve them.

Elves do not age, nor do they die, unless wounds, grief, or some artifice of the Enemy takes hold of them and ends their existence in Middle-earth. To other peoples they seem at once aged and ageless, possessing the lore and wisdom of experience together with the joyful nature of youth.

NATURE: The Elves take great care to trace their lineages and differentiate themselves, one group from another, but for the most part they have three main divisions:

THE NOLDOR

Also known as the High Elves, the Noldor were those Elves who went across the Sea. In time, at the urging of Fëanor, they rebelled against the Valar, and Fëanor led them back to Middle-earth. Powerful and learned—even compared to most Elves—they have great love of lore and the arts of making. The Elven-smiths of the Noldor surpass all others, even the Dwarves, in their crafts. They count the Rings of Power among their works. By the end of the Third Age, most Noldor had returned to Valinor via the Grey Havens, leaving only a few in Wandering Companies in Eriador, or lords of Elven-kingdoms who yet preferred to remain in their lands. Galadriel, Gildor, and Glorfindel are of the Noldor.

ADJUSTMENTS: +2 Bearing, +2 Perception, +1 Nimbleness, +1 Wits.

LANDS: Grey Havens (Mithlond), Rivendell, Lindon, and the Wandering Companies of Eriador.

SPEECH: In Middle-earth, Noldor converse and take names in Sindarin. Quenya, their ancestral tongue, is used only for preservation of lore and nostalgic expressions of longing for the West. Most also speak Westron.

NAMES: In Middle-earth, most Noldor adopt, or become known by, the Sindarin versions of their Quenya names.

Male: Aegnor, Celebring, Durlin, Echorion, Faegil, Fingolin, Galadhrion, Ithildir.
Female: Anórel, Elwen, Finduilas, Míriel, Nimbathel.

ABILITIES: The Noldor have the following abilities:

NOLDORIN LORE: A Noldo receives a +2 bonus to any one Lore skill or Smithcraft. During character creation, you must choose the skill to which you will apply this bonus.

INNER LIGHT: Because the Noldor have lived among the Valar across the Sea, 'against both the Seen and the Unseen they have great power.' Noldor receive a +4 bonus on all tests to resist or oppose the powers of the Shadow. This includes withstanding the fear caused by the Nazgûl, making attempts to Intimidate Sauron's servants, counteracting sorcery, and the like. However, it does not include tests to attack or defend against foes such as Orcs or evil Men. A Noldo born in Middle-earth after the Noldor returned from Valinor does not have this ability. PCs are assumed to have been part of the group that returned from Valinor.

THE SINDAR

Known as the Grey Elves, these are the Elves who began the journey across the Sea but chose to remain in Beleriand and the west of Middle-earth. Although their love for the wide lands of Middle-earth is strong, since the end of the First Age they have slowly been departing for the Uttermost West. Once awakened in them, the Sea-longing does not die. Although considered less powerful and wise than the Noldor, the Sindar remain more numerous in the Third Age, and they are renowned for their gifts of music and song. Legolas, Círdan, Celeborn, and Thranduil are all Grey Elves. Elrond's Elven heritage comes partly from the Grey Elves.

ADJUSTMENTS: +2 Nimbleness, +2 Perception, +1 Bearing, +1 Vitality.

LANDS: Lindon, Grey Havens (Mithlond), Lórien, and Mirkwood.

SPEECH: Sindarin, Silvan, and Westron.

NAMES:

Male: Belecthir, Curudur, Elrohir, Finglin, Lindir, Saelind.
Female: Arwen, Balorwen, Celebrían, Silivrien.

ABILITY: Grey Elves have the following ability:

MUSICAL GIFTS: Grey Elves receive a +2 bonus for Perform tests.

THE SILVAN ELVES

Also known as Wood-elves and East-elves, these are the Elves who, like the Sindar, did not undertake the journey across the Sea, preferring to remain in Middle-earth. Unlike the Grey Elves, most ceased their journey before even crossing the Misty Mountains. (Some later pressed on as far as Lindon.) Accounted of less wisdom, learning, and majesty than either the Noldor or the Sindar, they outnumber their cousins. During the Third Age they live in realms, such as Lórien, ruled by Noldorin or Grey Elves. They tend to distrust strangers and outsiders, at least until they get to know them.

ADJUSTMENTS: +2 Perception, +1 Bearing, +1 Nimbleness.

LANDS: Lórien and Mirkwood.

SPEECH: Silvan, Sindarin, and Westron.

NAMES:

Male: Amroth, Haldir, Orophin, Rúmil, Siriann.

Female: Denelind, Lórintal, Nileth, Nimrodel, Umbothel

ABILITY: The Silvan Elves have the following ability:

WOODSY: Silvan Elves receive a +2 bonus to any one of the following skills: Survival, Track, or Weather Sense. During character creation, you must choose the skill to receive this bonus.

ALL ELVES

LORE: The history of the Elves begins in Valinor, where they dwelt in bliss among the Valar, beneath the light of the Two Trees. But Morgoth the Enemy slew the Trees and stole the Silmarils, great jewels forged by Fëanor, which held the Trees' light within them. Fëanor led the Noldor back to Middle-earth to hunt for his stolen works. For centuries, aided at times by the other Free Peoples, the Noldor warred on Morgoth to recover the Silmarils, but they never succeeded. Only at the very end of the First Age was Morgoth overthrown. Thereafter, the Valar allowed the Noldor to return to Valinor—and permitted other Elves to journey there for the first time. Many Elves chose to remain in Middle-earth, for a time at least, out of pride or for love of its lands.

In the Second Age, Gil-galad, last High King of the Noldor in Middle-earth, ruled a great realm in Lindon, Círdan maintained the Grey Havens, Elrond founded the refuge of Imladris (Rivendell), and Galadriel and Celeborn assumed leadership over the Elves of Lórien. All were nearly destroyed in the War of the Elves and Sauron (SA 1693–1700), but the Elves held fast, and finally won with the help of the Men of Númenor. At the end of the Second Age, after Sauron brought about the destruction of Númenor, Gil-galad joined with Men to form the Last Alliance, and he and Elendil gave their lives to defeat the Dark Lord.

During the Third Age, though they still had strongholds such as Imladris, Lórien, and the Woodland Realm of Thranduil in Mirkwood, the Elves dwindled as Men became more powerful. Many departed from the Grey Havens to the lands across the Sea. Most spent their days in idle, joyful wandering or other pursuits, or governed their seemingly timeless realms with a strong though easy hand, aiding the causes of the Wise as they deemed best. After the War of the Ring, when the true Dominion of Men begins, most of the remaining Elf-lords, including Elrond and Galadriel, depart as well.

FAVOURED ORDERS/ADVENTURERS: For the Noldor: craftsman or loremaster. For the Sindar: minstrel. For the Silvan Elves: warrior. Additionally, Noldor and Sindar are often nobles over the Silvan Elves. In truth, Elves excel at all they turn their hands to, and they can belong to almost any order. Elven warriors are bold and powerful, a fearsome sight to the eyes of the servants of the Shadow. Elven mariners have greater skill with ship and sail than any others. And the natural ability of Elves to live in the wild makes them matchless rangers.

Elves cannot be barbarians, and they rarely are rogues.

SKILLS AND TRAITS: For an Elf player character, make six picks from the following skills and traits lists to begin the game. You can choose an additional trait by selecting one of the listed flaws too.

Skills: Acrobatics, Armed Combat, Climb, Craft, Debate, Healing, Insight, Inspire, Intimidate, Jump, Language, Lore, Mimicry, Observe, Perform, Persuade, Ranged Combat, Ride, Run, Sea-craft, Search, Smithcraft, Stealth, Survival, Swim, Track, Weather-sense.

Edges: Accurate, Ally, Ambidextrous, Craftsman, Curious, Dodge, Eloquent, Faithful, Friends, Gift of Tongues, Hoard, Honey-tongued, Incorruptible, Indomitable, Keen-eared, Night-eyed, Quick-draw, Resolute, Sense of Direction, Strong-willed, Tireless, Valour, Weapon Mastery, Wise, Woodcrafty.

Flaws: Arrogant, Code of Honour, Duty, Proud, Rival, Stiff-necked

ABILITIES: The following abilities apply to all Elves, regardless of type or origin:

THE ART:

' "They are fair garments, and the web is good, for it was made in this land. They are elvish robes certainly, if that is what you mean." '

— The Fellowship of the Ring

All Elves possess 'magical' qualities, though they do not think of them in those terms. Instead, these qualities are simple, natural abilities used for creation and joy, not domination and power over people and things. This virtue of enchantment passes into all that they make, such as *lembas, miruvor, ithildin,* cloaks, ropes, boats, and the like. They receive a +2 bonus with all magic-related tests, including Stamina tests needed to resist Weariness from spellcasting, tests necessary to use a spell successfully, and any other test the Narrator deems 'magic-related.' Furthermore, when using Craft skills, Elves can imbue the

BACKGROUND PACKAGES: ELVES

ELF OF THE GREY HAVENS (SINDA):
Climb +1, Lore +1, Perform +1, Sea-craft +2, Swim +1.
ELF OF LÓRIEN (NOLDO):
Armed Combat +1, Language +1, Lore +2, Ranged Combat +1, Smithcraft +1.
ELF OF LÓRIEN (SILVAN):
Armed Combat +1, Climb +1, Lore +1, Ranged Combat +2, Survival (Forest) +1.
ELF OF MIRKWOOD (SINDA):
Armed Combat +1, Lore +1, Perform +1, Ranged Combat +1, Stealth +1, Survival (Forest) +1.
ELF OF MIRKWOOD (SILVAN):
Armed Combat +1, Climb +1, Ranged Combat +1, Stealth +1, Survival (Forest) +1, Track +1.
ELF OF RIVENDELL (NOLDO):
Healing +1, Language +2, Lore +2, Smithcraft +1.
ELF OF RIVENDELL (SINDA):
Lore +2, Perform +2, Ranged Combat +1, Ride +1.
ELF OF THE WANDERING COMPANIES (NOLDO):
Language +1, Lore +2, Perform +1, Ranged Combat +1, Run +1.

objects they create with minor, but often quite useful, magical powers. They automatically have the craftsman special ability Enchantment (see page 83). They only need a Craft skill at 6+ to use it, and they can create more powerful items than a non-Elven craftsman can. See 'Enchanted Items' on page 192 for more details on how to create such items. The Narrator has final authority over what an Elf can do with this ability.

Beast-skill:

> *'But Legolas asked them to take off saddle and rein. "I need them not," he said, and leaped lightly up, and to their wonder Arod was tame and willing...'*
>
> *— The Two Towers*

Elves have great rapport with good animals, such as horses and eagles. They can speak with them, sense their feelings and thoughts, and call on them for service at need. They receive a +4 bonus with Ride and other animal-related tests.

Comfort:

> *'The storm had troubled him little,*
> *and he alone of the Company*
> *remained still light of heart.'*
>
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

Elves feel no discomfort in hot or cold weather, and they suffer no ill effects (either skill penalties or damage) from it.

Elven Form: All Elves have the Fair edge.

Elven-sense:

> *' "I do not think the wood feels evil,*
> *whatever tales may say[.]" '*
>
> *— Legolas, The Two Towers*

Elves can sense the presence of power, evil, ancient tragedies, and the subtle menace of the Shadow better than others. They receive *Sense Power* (page 186) as a magical ability.

Elven-sleep: Elves do not sleep as other peoples do. They can obtain all the rest they need through simple relaxation or by letting their minds wander 'in the strange paths of elvish dreams' (*The Two Towers*). They automatically recover all lost Weariness Levels with but a single hour of quiet rest.

Farsightedness:

> *' "You have the keen eyes of your fair kindred, Legolas," he said; "and they can tell a sparrow from a finch a league off." '*
>
> *— The Two Towers*

Elvish eyes see farther and better than the eyes of Men, Dwarves, or Hobbits. All Elves have the Keen-eyed edge. Moreover, they can discern detail—such as the number and armament of riders—at up to 10 leagues away, if nothing blocks their view.

Ghost-scorn: The ghosts of Men hold no terror for the Elves, who are immune to any fear effects they create.

Lightfootedness:

> *' "But I say: let a ploughman plough,*
> *but choose an otter for swimming,*
> *and for running light over grass and leaf,*
> *or over snow—an Elf." '*
>
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

The Elves move swiftly (+4 bonus to Run tests) and silently, even when running (+4 bonus to Stealth tests, with none of the standard penalties for moving faster than a walk). They step lightly (–4 penalty to Track tests made to follow them) and can walk on such fragile surfaces as snow, unbent grass, and narrow branches without difficulty. Moreover, they have superb balance, rarely falling off even the slenderest branches or narrowest ledges (+4 bonus to Acrobatics (Balance) tests).

Swift Healing: Elves heal with great speed. They all have the Swift Recovery edge. Also, they do not become sick or catch illnesses.

ENTS

Also numbered among the Free Peoples, though they rarely enter into the tales, are Ents, the Treeherds, created in ancient days to protect the forests from the Dwarves and others who would despoil them. In form like trees—from sturdy, towering oaks to light birches and rowans—Ents nevertheless possess wit, the ability to move, and hands to hold and craft objects. They live on ent-draughts of cool, clear water (see page 196).

As long-lived as Elves, Ents are 'unhasty' folk who consider their actions at length. Many have become so like normal trees that others cannot tell them apart. Once roused to anger, though, Ents are dangerous indeed, for they are immensely strong, able to tear down stone walls the same way tree-roots often do, but in mere seconds instead of decades. They reserve their greatest hatred for those who wantonly burn trees or hew them with axes.

Because they almost never leave their forests and cannot easily work with other peoples, Ents are not a proper race for player characters. But other characters can certainly have fun meeting them.

HOBBITS

'Hobbits are an unobtrusive but very ancient people, more numerous formerly than they are today; for they love peace and quiet and good tilled earth...'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

Hobbits are a people distantly akin to Men, though they are shorter and less stocky than Dwarves, with a height between two and four feet. Hence they are known as 'halflings' among Men. They wear comfortable clothes in bright colours, particularly yellow and green, and they bear curly dark hair both on their heads and on the tops of their leathery feet, on which they rarely wear shoes. Generally good-natured, peaceful, hospitable, filled with laughter, and possessing a great love of good food and drink (they consume six meals a day), Hobbits keep to themselves in the land they call the Shire.

NATURE: Hobbits define three strains among their people, each identifiable by common preferences, habits, and qualities:

FALLOHIDES

The least numerous type of Hobbit, Fallohides are taller and slimmer and have fairer skin and hair than their brethren. They also have more skill with language and song than with craftwork. Oft possessing a streak of boldness and a sense of adventure unusual in Hobbits, they love trees and woodlands and enjoy the company of Elves. Like Bilbo and Frodo, both of whom had a strong Fallohide strain in their ancestry, they often become leaders among their people.

ADJUSTMENTS: +1 Nimbleness, +1 Perception, −1 Strength

HARFOOTS

The most numerous of the Hobbits, Harfoots tend to be shorter than most of their folk, with browner skin. Their neat and nimble fingers make them good at craftwork, and they have better relations with Dwarves than other hobbits do. They favour highlands and hillsides, and they have retained the old hobbit custom of living in holes and tunnels the longest.

ADJUSTMENTS: +2 Nimbleness, +1 Perception, −1 Bearing, −1 Strength

STOORS

Broader and heavier than other Hobbits, and with larger feet and hands, Stoors are most common in the Marish and Buckland. They have less shyness of men than their cousins do, and they are the only Hobbits who know aught of swimming, boats, and fishing. They prefer to live in flatlands and beside rivers.

ADJUSTMENTS: +2 Nimbleness, +1 Perception, −1 Bearing, −1 Strength

ALL HOBBITS

Most Hobbits have lifespans equal to those of ordinary Men. A Hobbit older than 100 is considered quite elderly and respectable.

Hobbits originally lived in holes and tunnels, and many (particularly Harfoots) still do. Their dwellings range from poor, simple holes to larger, more luxurious warrens called *smials*. But by the

late Third Age, many live in long, low houses of wood, brick, and stone. Their workshops, mills, and smithies are also in buildings.

Hobbits have long childhoods, coming of age at 33; they refer to the carefree and irresponsible twenties as the 'tweens.' Birthdays are an occasion of much celebration in which the *rib-adyan* (celebrant) both receives and gives away presents, often *mathoms*, objects Hobbits have no use for but don't wish to throw away.

Lands: Though they once dwelt in the Vales of Anduin and in the region of Dunland, by the late Third Age all Hobbits live in or near a region of northwestern Eriador they call the Shire, a 40 by 50 league region first settled by the Fallohide brothers, Marcho and Blanco, in TA 1601 with permission of the High King at Fornost. A green and pleasant land of rolling hills, tilled fields, sunny meadows, small woods, and mild weather, the Shire is divided into four *farthings*—North, East, South, and West—and suits their amicable nature quite well. Because they can grow and build there everything they need, they rarely have any traffic with outsiders, except for Dwarves and other travellers passing through their lands.

The Hobbits of the Shire recognize the authority of a leader they call the *Thain*, though he does little actual governing, it rarely being needed. The chief of the Took family holds this office. Their largest town, Michel Delving, has a mayor elected every seven years. A group of Hobbits called the Watch, or the 'Shirriffs,' keeps the peace and rounds up stray animals. Three Shirriffs patrol each farthing, and several 'Bounders' keep undesirables from crossing the borders.

Speech: All Hobbits speak Westron, with some Hobbit words specific to themselves.

Names: Hobbit names consist of a personal name followed by a family name.

Family Names: Baggins, Boffin, Bolger, Bracegirdle, Brandybuck, Brockhouse, Burrows, Chubb, Cotton, Goodbody, Grubb, Hornblower, Proudfoot, Took.

Male: Andwise, Balbo, Bungo, Drogo, Fosco, Fredegar, Hamson, Longo, Milo, Odo, Paladin, Rorimac, Saradoc.

Female: Adaldrida, Daisy, Esmeralda, Estella, Pearl, Peony, Primula, Rosamunda, Rose.

Hobbits of Renown: Few Hobbits have entered into the chronicles of the Wise and thus become known to other peoples. Indeed, before the War of the Ring, the Men of Gondor and Rohan considered Hobbits the stuff of tales. But the actions of Bilbo Baggins (the

Background Packages: Hobbits

Baggins (Fallohide): **Craft +1, Games +1, Observe +1, Persuade +1, Ranged Combat +1; Hoard 1**

Bolger (Fallohide): **Craft +1, Debate +1, Observe +1, Persuade +1, Ranged Combat +1; Hoard 1**

Brandybuck (Fallohide): **Craft +1, Games +1, Observe +1, Persuade +1, Survival +1, Ranged Combat +1**

Cotton (Harfoot): **Craft +2, Debate +1, Games +1, Observe +1, Ranged Combat +1**

Proudfoot (Harfoot): **Craft +1, Debate +1, Games +1, Inquire +1, Observe +1, Ranged Combat +1**

Took (Fallohide): **Craft +1, Debate +1, Observe +1, Persuade +1, Survival +1; Hoard 1**

Ringfinder), his cousin Frodo Baggins (the Ring-bearer), and the other three Hobbits who joined the Company of the Ring—Samwise Gamgee, Meriadoc 'Merry' Brandybuck, and Peregrin 'Pippin' Took—have brought themselves and their people much fame.

FAVOURED ORDERS/ADVENTURERS: Craftsman. Hobbits make excellent cooks, gardeners, and farmers. They rarely, if ever, become involved in adventures—Bilbo and Frodo notwithstanding—preferring a peaceful life and regularly scheduled meals to the rigours of the Wild. Still, the well-known Hobbit accuracy with thrown or shot objects can make them skilled warriors, and their nimble fingers are ideally suited for roguish pursuits—which is, of course, how Bilbo got his start. Among themselves, they have nobles, defined by wealth and respect rather than hereditary titles.

SKILLS AND TRAITS: For a Hobbit player character, make six picks from the following skills and traits lists to begin the game. You can choose an additional trait by selecting one of the listed flaws too.

Skills: Acrobatics, Climb, Conceal, Craft, Debate, Games, Inquire, Insight, Language, Legerdemain, Lore, Observe, Perform, Persuade, Ranged Combat, Search, Stealth, Survival, Track, Weather-sense.

Edges: Accurate, Ambidextrous, Charmed Life, Craftsman, Curious, Dodge, Eloquent, Fair, Faithful, Favour of Fortune, Friends, Furtive, Hoard, Honour's Insight, Incorruptible, Indomitable, Keen-eared, Keen-eyed, Swift Recovery, Valour.

Flaws: Code of Honour, Duty, Grasping, Rival, Stiff-necked, Weak, Weak-willed.

ABILITIES: Hobbits of all types have the following abilities:

SIX MEALS A DAY: All Hobbits have the skill Craft: Cooking +3.

SMALL FOLK: Hobbits are considered Small. They have only four Wound Levels.

SOFT-FOOTED: Hobbits move swiftly and silently, often disappearing so quickly that it seems like magic to the Big Folk (Men). They receive a +4 bonus to Stealth tests, and any who try to track them suffer a –2 penalty to the Track test.

SURE AT THE MARK: Hobbits' accuracy with thrown objects and shot weapons is legendary among those who know them. They receive a +2 bonus to hit targets with Ranged Combat tests.

TOUGH AS OLD TREE-ROOTS: Though unused to hard labour or dangers, Hobbits possess a curious toughness and resistance to domination. They receive a +2 bonus for Willpower reaction tests to resist Corruption (see page 234).

> *' "Soft as butter they can be, and yet sometimes as tough as old tree-roots." '*
>
> *— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring*

MEN

'"If Gondor has such men still in these days of fading, great must have been its glory in the days of its rising."'
— Legolas, The Return of the King

The most numerous and diverse of the Free Peoples in the Third Age, but also among the most numerous and powerful of the Dark Lord's servants, Men (or the *Edain* in Sindarin) live throughout Middle-earth—from the farthest East to western Eriador, from Harad to the northern wastes. Some are short and ill-favoured, others tall and broad-shouldered. Some speak in harsh dialects, others with fair words. Some honour the spirit of the Valar, while others heed only Sauron.

NATURE: By the reckoning of the Men of Gondor in the late Third Age, there are several types of Men:

THE DÚNEDAIN

These are the Men descended from the Edain who were given the island of Númenor, but who later returned to Middle-earth, either during the days of the rule of Westernesse there, or with Elendil and his sons after the Downfall. They founded the realms of Arnor and Gondor, and rule Gondor still. Though a mingling with lesser Men has much diminished their blood, a few of pure heritage, or in whom the qualities of the Númenóreans live again, still remain, such as the Rangers of Eriador, or Faramir of Gondor. Some Dúnedain, known as the Black Númenóreans, long ago went to live in the East and South, where they founded realms among the lesser Men and became followers of Sauron.

ADJUSTMENTS: +1 Bearing, +1 Wits.

SPEECH: Westron and Sindarin.

THE MIDDLE PEOPLES

These Men are descended from the same peoples from whom the Dúnedain came, but who did not go to Númenor—and perhaps not even into Beleriand—in the First Age. The vast majority of Gondorians also fall into this category, due to centuries of intermarriage with the pre-Númenórean peoples of the region. The Rohirrim, most Men of Gondor and Eriador, and the Beornings and other Men of the North are all Middle Men. So, too, are the Dunlendings, descendants of Men who once lived in the White Mountains, though the Gondorians refer to them as 'wild.'

ADJUSTMENTS: +1 Strength, +1 Vitality.

SPEECH: Westron and sometimes local tongues, like Rohiric.

MEN OF DARKNESS

The Easterlings are Men who came late to Beleriand, did not belong to one of the Three Houses, and who for the most part fell under the dominion of Morgoth and, later, Sauron. As the name records, they came from the East (and South), and live there still in the Third Age, having many realms, kingdoms, and tribes. The Wainriders and the Balchoth are of this stock, as are the Haradrim (Southrons) and the Variags of Khand. Compared to the Dúnedain and Middle Men, they are shorter, broader, darker haired and darker eyed, and they usually have swart or sallow skin, from the duskier shades of the Men of Rhûn to the black of the Haradrim. The Men of Gondor refer to these Men, too, as 'wild.'

Most Easterlings, having lived long under the sway of the Shadow, bear no love for the Men of the West and war against them frequently. Thus, this type of Man makes a poor choice for a player character. Only the Men of Dorwinion trade peacefully with the West. (In the Fourth Age, King Elessar makes peace with many, but not all, Easterling and Southron realms.)

ADJUSTMENTS: +1 Nimbleness, +1 Strength, −1 Wits.

SPEECH: Westron and various local dialects corresponding to the character's homeland.

THE WILD MEN

A few races of Men, also called by the Gondorians 'wild,' truly fit that term. Short, squat, and ugly, living rudely in the wilds with strange customs and equally strange speech, they nevertheless possess a certain nobility and powers of their own. They include the Drúedain (Woses) who live in the forests of Anórien and Drúwaith Iaur, and the Lossoth (the Snowmen of Forochel) who inhabit the Northern Waste.

ADJUSTMENTS: +1 Perception, +1 Strength,+1 Vitality

SPEECH: Westron and various local dialects corresponding to the character's homeland.

ABILITY: Wild Men receive a +2 bonus to Survival, Track, Weather Sense, and similarly woodcrafty skills.

ALL MEN

If not slain in battle, taken by illness, or laid low by mischance, most Men live about 60 years. During the Second Age, the Númenóreans lived much longer, sometimes to more than two hundred years. Their descendants likewise have longer lifespans and greater vigour than lesser Men, but even those benefits have dwindled, so that one such as Aragorn Elessar, who dies at 210, is unique.

NAMES: Each group or realm of Men has its own naming customs. The Dúnedain use Sindarin names whereas others, such as the Rohirrim and Beornings, take names in their own tongues. What strange names the Easterlings, Haradrim, and Wild Men have, and how they get them, is not known in the West.

MEN OF RENOWN: The records of Arnor and Gondor chronicle the deeds of many wise and bold Men, but none, perhaps, so wise and bold as Aragorn, son of Arathorn, and Faramir, son of Denethor.

Aragorn ascended to the chieftainship of the Dúnedain of the North

BACKGROUND PACKAGES: MEN

BEORNING (MIDDLE MAN):
Armed Combat +2, Ranged Combat +1, Survival (Forests or Mountains) +1, Track +1; Hardy.
DUNLENDING (MIDDLE MAN):
Armed Combat +1, Climb +1, Ranged Combat +1, Ride +1, Survival (Forests or Mountains) +2.
EASTERLING TRIBESMAN (EASTERLING):
Armed Combat +2, Ranged Combat +2, Ride +1, Survival (Plains) +1.
SOUTHRON TRIBESMAN (SOUTHRON):
Armed Combat +1, Ranged Combat +1, Ride +1, Run +1, Survival (Jungle or Southern Waste) +1; Travel-sense.
MAN OF BREE (MIDDLE MAN):
Craft +2, Debate +1, Games +1, Run +1; Friends.
MAN OF DALE (MIDDLE MAN):
Armed Combat +1, Craft +1, Debate +1, Ranged Combat +1, Ride +1, Run +1.
MAN OF GONDOR (MIDDLE MAN):
Armed Combat +1, Craft +1, Lore +1, Observe +1, Ranged Combat +1, Run +1.
MAN OF MINAS TIRITH (DÚNADAN):
Armed Combat +1, Climb +1, Lore +1, Persuade +1, Ranged Combat +1, Run +1.
RIDER OF ROHAN (MIDDLE MAN):
Armed Combat +1, Ranged Combat +1, Ride +2; Honour's Insight, Night-eyed.

while still a child. For nearly a century, he worked and struggled endlessly against the Shadow, not only because it had to be defeated but because doing so was the only way he could win his kingdom and the hand of Arwen Undómiel.

Faramir, the second son of the last Ruling Steward of Gondor, embodied the highest qualities and beliefs of the Dúnedain with his honour, valour, and willingness to sacrifice his own good for that of his people. After nearly dying during the War of the Ring, he was made Prince of Ithilien by King Elessar.

FAVOURED ORDERS/ADVENTURERS: Warrior. From the Riders of Rohan, to the knights of Dol Amroth, to chariot-riding Easterling chiefs, to the Guards of the Citadel of Minas Tirith, Men fight marvellously well. But they excel at many other crafts, being skilled of mind and hand, and they can be part of any order.

SKILLS AND TRAITS: For a Man player character, make six picks from the following skills and traits lists to begin the game. You can choose an additional trait by selecting any flaw too:

Skills: Armed Combat; Climb; Conceal; Craft; Debate; Games; Healing; Inquire; Insight; Inspire; Intimidate; Jump; Language; Lore; Observe; Perform; Persuade; Ranged Combat; Ride; Run; Seacraft; Search; Smithcraft; Stonecraft; Stealth; Survival; Swim; Teamster; Track; Weather-sense.

Traits: Any.

ABILITIES: All Men have the following special abilities:

ADAPTABLE: Unlike the other races, Men have learned to live anywhere in Middle-earth, even in the harsh wastes of the far North and South. To reflect their adaptability, a Man character gains a +2 bonus to his Stamina, his Swiftness, or his Willpower. You must choose which one during character creation.

THE ELVEN-BLOODED

Only three times have Men joined with Noldor, or Sindar of high rank, and the histories of those unions and their offspring are well-known. But some houses of Men, such as the princely house of Dol Amroth, show signs of ancient Elvish ancestry, likely from the Elder Days when Men and Silvan Elves lived close to one another in parts of Middle-earth.

While no player character could be truly Half-elven—like Elros Tar-Minyatur or his brother Elrond—without changing the history of Middle-earth, some could be Elven-blooded like Prince Imrahil. Elven-blooded Men are fair of feature (often having the Fair edge) and always beardless like their Elven ancestors. They sometimes have other traits associated with Elves as well (Accurate, Keen-eared, Keen-eyed, or Woodcrafty, for example).

An Elven-blooded character must have the following minimum attribute scores: Bearing 6, Nimbleness 8, Perception 8, Vitality 6. If a character qualifies, he should then take the Dúnadan adjustments, and choose skills and traits as for Men.

THE DOMINION OF MAN: Men receive an extra point of Courage, since they are skilled and able, readily turning their powers to any task or problem that confronts them.

SKILLED: Men have learned much lore and developed a great body of skills and abilities to help themselves survive. After they choose their racial skills and traits, they may add +2 ranks to one skill, or +1 rank to each of two skills.

AGE

To all but the Elves and Ents, who remain ageless by mortal standards, life is short. As the winters accumulate, one by one, Dwarves, Hobbits, and Men become feebler, though perhaps wiser through experience. At the beginning of the game, you must decide what age your character is, using the accompanying table as a guideline. The Age Effects Table indicates the exact game effects of being very young or very old.

If appropriate, the Narrator can alter the guidelines provided in the table. For example, a Dúnadan of exceptionally pure blood, such as Aragorn, may live much longer than indicated in the table, especially if he leads an easy, healthy life.

TABLE 3.1: AGE EFFECTS

AGE CATEGORY	EFFECTS
Child	−2 Bearing , Strength, and Vitality, −1 Nimbleness, Perception, and Wits, −1 to all reactions
Youth	−1 to all attributes
Adult	None
Old	−1 Nimbleness, Strength, and Vitality, +1 Bearing, Perception, and Wits, −1 Stamina and Swiftness, +1 Savvy
Aged	−2 Strength, Vitality and Nimbleness, +1 Bearing and Perception, −2 Stamina and Swiftness

TABLE 3.2: AGE

	AGE CATEGORY				
RACE	CHILD	YOUTH	ADULT	OLD	AGED
Dwarves	01-14	15-29	30-174	175-219	220+
HOBBITS					
Fallowhide	01-09	10-32	33-79	80-94	95+
Harfoot	01-09	10-32	33-79	80-89	90+
Stoor	01-09	10-32	33-79	80-89	90+
MEN					
Dúnadan	01-09	10-24	25-79	80-104	105+
Middle Man	01-09	10-15	16-44	45-59	60+
Easterling	01-09	10-15	16-39	40-54	55+
Wild Man	01-08	10-14	15-29	30-50	51+

CHARACTER CREATION EXAMPLE: MENELCAR AND GRÓR

Continued from page 57:

Because Christian and John chose the races Dúnadan and Dwarf, respectively, for their characters, they now adjust Menelcar's and Grór's attribute scores to the following:

MENELCAR

ATTRIBUTE	**REACTIONS**
Bearing 7 (±0)	Stamina +2
Nimbleness 7 (±0)	Swiftness +2
Perception 5 (±0)	Willpower +1
Strength 10 (+2)	Wisdom ±0
Vitality 8 (+1)	
Wits 6 (±0)	

GRÓR

ATTRIBUTE	**REACTIONS**
Bearing 9 (+1)	Stamina +3
Nimbleness 7 (±0)	Swiftness ±0
Perception 6 (±0)	Willpower ±0
Strength 13 (+3)	Wisdom +1
Vitality 9 (+1)	
Wits 4 (±0)	

Menelcar receives 18 ranks' worth (Wits 6 x 3) of native skills; he chooses Language: Westron (Common) +3, Language: Sindarin +1, Language: Quenya +1, Lore: History (Gondor) +5, Lore: Realm (Gondor) +4, Lore: Heraldry +4. Grór gets 12 ranks' worth; he chooses Language: Khuzdul +4, Language: Westron (Common) +2, Lore: History (Dwarves) +4, and Lore: Realm (Erebor) +2.

Now they each have to make six picks' worth of racial skills and traits. Christian decides that Menelcar grew up on the coast of Gondor, so he chooses Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword) +1, Sea-craft (Sailing) +1, Survival (Forest) +1, Swim +2, and Weather-sense +1. John, on the other hand, decides that Grór was brought up at his father's side in the forge, so he puts his picks in Armed Combat: Axes (Battle Axe) +1, Craft: Toymaking +2, Smithcraft (Weaponsmith) +3.

Lastly, they note their characters' racial abilities and favoured attributes and reactions. Menelcar places his +2 from Adaptable in Swiftness, giving him +2 total. He also adds +2 to his Survival, giving him a total rank of +3. John makes note of Grór's abilities. They both choose Strength and Vitality as their Favoured Attributes, and Stamina as their Favoured Reaction (making these easier to improve during advancement).

Continued on page 112.

Chapter Four

WARRIORS, WIZARDS AND KINGS

'"It is hard to be sure of anything among so many marvels. The world is all grown strange. ... How shall a man judge what to do in such times?"'
— Éomer, The Two Towers

After choosing your character's race, the next thing to think about is what your character does. He might be a bold swordsman, using his skill at arms and his strength of limb to defend the kingdoms of the West from the Shadow, a wise magician or loremaster versed in the lore of the ages, or a wily burglar who with his wits and nimble fingers filches treasures from guarded store-rooms. *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* refers to this as a character's 'order.'

Although the term 'order' sometimes implies organization and leadership, orders in the game usually are nothing like that. 'Order' simply refers to a classification of people with similar training and abilities—and often personalities—not to distinctive groups, guilds, or units of people. A Citadel-guard from Minas Tirith, a rider of the Rohirrim, and a Dwarf-axeman all belong to the warrior order, though they may have little else in common.

THE ORDERS

At the beginning of the game, players can choose from nine orders for their characters. The orders are broad categories that describe the types of characters found in Middle-earth, each subject to a wide range of variation from place to place and people to people. They also provide a character with skills, special abilities, and other capabilities that help him face challenges in the game.

There are also a number of elite orders that characters can choose to join in the course of the chronicle. These are described later in this chapter.

Orders

CREATING A PLAYER CHARACTER GROUP

When you create your character, your fellow players are also creating their own characters. While it's easy to figure out what you want to play on your own, before setting pen to paper you should consider what the other players have in mind for their own characters. If possible, the players and the Narrator should all sit down together and have a character creation session. If you can't do that, you should at least talk about the composition of the group before everyone begins creating.

Approaching character creation from a group perspective has several benefits. First, it ensures that each player has a distinctive role to play within the group—an outlook, abilities, and knowledge that other characters lack. If several players come to the first game session with similar characters (say, warriors from Gondor), then they may have trouble setting themselves apart, and the Narrator may have difficulty creating appropriate adventures for such a one-dimensional group. Discussing character concepts in advance allows you to avoid this sort of problem. Even if several players have roughly similar ideas, since they know in advance what their friends want to play, they can use the rules to distinguish their characters by belonging to different races, choosing different order abilities, or emphasizing different order skills.

Second, group character creation allows you to cover all the major roles one expects to find in a group of bold, fantasy adventurers. Except in specific types of tailored campaigns, a group with nothing but warriors, or six types of rogues, normally doesn't work well. Eventually, the group encounter challenges it's not prepared for, since not every enemy can be defeated in the same way. You don't have to have every order represented in every group, but it helps to have more than one or two types of characters, if you can, or at least to give similar characters their own unique sets of skills and abilities.

Third, planning characters as a group allows the players to develop their characters *as a group,* not just as a collection of individuals thrown together by circumstance. Frodo's encounter with Aragorn at The Prancing Pony aside, characters rarely join forces simply because they happen to meet somewhere. That doesn't really do much to advance the story or create the most enjoyable sort of chronicle. In fact, Aragorn's presence at the inn was no coincidence. The characters need a reason to remain together: a common goal, a prior relationship, or the like. In other words, they need the sort of connections that kept Sam, Pippin, and Merry by Frodo's side despite all the dangers he had to face. If the players create their characters as a group, they can develop pre-existing ties or build in hooks the Narrator can use to draw them together as a cohesive group.

The Narrator, of course, plays an important part in this process too. Instead of letting the players create their characters alone, the Narrator should lend a hand. First, she should tell the players a little about what she has in mind for the chronicle. If she wants a group in which all the characters are Men (or Hobbits or Dwarves or whatever), she must tell the players before they start creating characters. If she plans to start the chronicle in Lindon, the players need to know that. They need to be able to give their characters a reason to be in Lindon when the game begins.

In short, when creating your character, apply a little consideration for the ideas of the Narrator and your fellow players. This makes for a better gaming experience.

The basic orders are:

BARBARIAN: A warrior of the wilds who may lack some of the refined skills and weapons of other fighting men, but who makes up for it with woodcraftiness and ferocity. Many Dunlendings, Drúedain, and Easterlings belong to this order.

CRAFTSMAN: A person skilled in the arts of making, able to craft items both useful and wondrous, or who serves others in some ordinary capacity. Sam Gamgee, Barliman Butterbur, many Dwarves, and the Noldorin jewelsmiths are all craftsmen.

LOREMASTER: One wise in the lore of Middle-earth and who, though not a true caster of spells, can use some minor or subtle magics. Denethor, Celeborn, and many Elves are loremasters.

MAGICIAN: One who works magic and casts spells based on learned lore and wisdom, but who is not as powerful as a wizard.

MARINER: A sailor, one who knows how to work and steer ships great and small over the wide seas and on the Great River. Coastal Gondorians and the Corsairs of Umbar and count many mariners among their number.

MINSTREL: A singer of songs, teller of tales, and chronicler of brave and noble deeds. With his words and music, he can inspire others.

NOBLE: A person who, due to birth, wealth, accomplishments, or the like, is regarded as of high rank in society, entitled to deference and respect from other folk. Boromir, Denethor, Aragorn, Celeborn, and even Frodo belong, at least in part, to this order.

ROGUE: A person who lives and works with his wits and deft hands, often at questionable or outlawed pursuits. He may be a spy for the Enemy, a 'professional treasure-seeker,' or simply one who prefers subtlety and guile to warfare and bloodshed. Bilbo, during his brief adventure with Thorin and company, became a member of this order. Gríma Wormtongue is also a rogue.

STARTING SKILLS

Between their races, orders, and free picks, characters can start the game with many different skills. However, one rule applies: Unless the Narrator decides otherwise, no character can start the game with more than six ranks in any skill. This has two effects. First, it forces players to diversify their characters a little, instead of simply concentrating all their picks on two or three skills. Second, it gives characters room to grow, even within their chosen fields of expertise. Narrators who want to run chronicles featuring more powerful, experienced, or advanced characters can increase this limit or abolish it altogether.

WARRIOR: People, such as guardsmen, soldiers, and archers, who are trained to fight with weapons. This is the most common order depicted in *The Lord of the Rings,* and it may likely be so in your chronicle as well. It includes Aragorn, Boromir, Éomer, Éowyn, most Rohirrim, Beregond, Prince Imrahil, and eventually even Merry and Pippin.

ORDER PROFILES

To make it easy for you to learn about and evaluate the different orders, each one is discussed in the same manner.

DESCRIPTION

First, each order includes a section describing it in general—what sort of skills and abilities its members have, the weapons and gear they tend to use, and what they're known for. This section also includes some examples from J.R.R. Tolkien's novels, to guide you in choosing an order for your own character.

ADVENTURES: This section discusses what prompts members of the order to go out into the wide world and adventure—the motivations driving them to become involved in your chronicle. What sort of adventures do they prefer? What role do they play in a group of adventurers? What other orders do they like to work with or are often found with?

ADVANCING: In this section, you discover how characters typically learn or adopt this order, as well as how a character might advance or grow. This includes lists of what other orders—basic or elite—such characters might want to become a part of later in the chronicle, and what sort of preparations they may need to make to do so.

GAME INFORMATION

A section including more specific information, including game rules, follows the general discussion of the order.

ATTRIBUTES: Each order favours certain attributes, ones that help its members accomplish the tasks they most often undertake, or ones on which many of their primary skills are based. This section also discusses other attributes that may help to round out the character. In addition, if there are any minimum attribute requirements to join the order, these are mentioned here.

Each character has two *favoured attributes* and one *favoured reaction*, both chosen by the player during character creation. These are easier for the character to advance and improve through experience.

SKILLS AND TRAITS: At the beginning of the game, you must decide what your character can do, and this section helps you do it. First, it lists the *order skills* for the order, the skills its members can pick at the cheaper rate indicated in the Advancement Picks Table on page 278.

Five 'packages' for each order are also listed here. These represent how you would create characters of specific backgrounds within each order. If you choose one, your character receives the listed skills at the listed ranks automatically, but he still has the chance to improve some of them with five extra picks. If you prefer, you may instead use these five picks to acquire ranks in order skills not included in the package. You also get to choose one of the listed edges. You may take one or more flaws as well, up to a maximum of four overall, including any racial flaw you may have taken. Each flaw allows you to add +1 to one skill or take one extra pick from the listed edges.

The packages are optional, provided solely for your convenience. If you prefer, you can, with the Narrator's permission, re-arrange the skill allotment within a package, or even create your own packages using the following method. First, take 15 ranks of order skills, with no skill at greater than +3. Next, add five ranks to those order skills however you like. You could put all five in one skill or split them up among two to five skills. However, you still cannot exceed the starting limit of +6 in any one skill. Alternately, you can use the five picks on other order skills instead. Lastly, choose one edge appropriate to the order and character type.

ABILITIES: Several *order abilities* are listed here. These are special powers, skills, or capabilities that some members of that order possess. At the beginning of the game, you may choose *one* order ability for your character. As the chronicle progresses and your character advances, you will have the opportunity to choose more abilities or to improve the ones you already have, if that is possible. For example, craftsmen can have the Place of Trade ability, which gives them a shop or house in which they can practice their craft. By allotting additional picks to that ability later, they can increase the amount of money they earn by means of this ability.

Some abilities have *requisites*—requirements the character must meet before you can choose them. For example, the warrior's Swift Strike ability states that a character must have Nimbleness 6+ and Armed Combat 8+ to pick it.

BARBARIAN

'"You hear the Woses, the Wild Men of the Woods: ... Remnants of an older time they be, living few and secretly, wild and wary as beasts."'

— Elfhelm, The Return of the King

Barbarians are warriors of the wild peoples, fierce defenders of their lands and tribes. Though they often lack the bright armour and shining swords of the knights of Gondor, and the swift horses of the Rohirrim, they craft from the things of their own lands the weapons and tools their survival requires. If need be, they can use the venom of serpents—or poisons they brew themselves—to make their weapons kill with the slightest scratch, but their power to remain unseen and strike at their foes from ambush is even deadlier.

BELONGING TO MULTIPLE ORDERS

As you may have noted in the accompanying descriptions, some characters belong to more than one order. Aragorn is a warrior, a noble, and a ranger (an elite order), while Celeborn is both a loremaster and a noble. While most *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* characters will have only one order, others may be more broadly experienced.

The first order chosen for a character during character creation is free. But becoming a member of additional orders—basic or elite—has a price. For each additional order you wish to add to a character, you must spend five advancement picks—one entire advancement's worth (see page 277). Spending those picks makes you a member of the additional order and allows you to make picks from its skill list at the order skill cost. However, your second (and subsequent) orders, basic or elite, do *not* give you a free order ability; you must obtain any abilities from your additional orders with picks.

By joining a new order, a character gains access to many new order skills and order abilities. However, regardless of how many orders (basic or elite) the character belongs to, he may only make order skill and ability picks from *two* of them at any one time. The character retains any skills or abilities already acquired from any of his orders, of course, but for future advancements he must restrict himself to two orders. As soon as he acquires a third order—and every time he joins another order thereafter—he must define from which two orders he can make skill and ability picks. He cannot change his decision until he acquires an additional order or spends another five advancement picks to rejoin a previously abandoned order.

STARTING WITH NO ORDER

Not all characters have to begin the game as part of an order. Not everyone who becomes involved in an adventure has a 'job.' For example, at the beginning of *The Lord of the Rings*, neither Merry nor Pippin belong to any order. They each possess a few skills, based on their race, but that's pretty much it. As the story goes on, they soon begin to develop into warriors, eventually becoming renowned throughout the lands of Middle-earth.

If you want to start the game with a character like this, that's wonderful, since it provides many interesting roleplaying opportunities. Simply create a character and make his racial skill and trait picks (see Chapter Three). Make his five 'free picks' as well. Then tentatively decide which order you want your character to join later in the chronicle. Let your Narrator know, so she can make a note of this order and give some thought to how the character can become a member of it during the course of the game. If the character wants to become a warrior, the Narrator should work in story elements, such as combats, where he has to learn or die, plus friendly warriors who can give him instruction in how to fight. If the character decides to become a loremaster or magician, the Narrator can team him up with an NPC who can teach him, or she can have him find an ancient book of lore in a ruined tower, so that he can teach himself.

Over the course of the chronicle, as the character has the opportunity to learn, the Narrator should dole his order skill picks out to him until he has them all. The packages listed with each order give a character 15 ranks of various order skills—with the exact skill picks depending on background and personal preference—five ranks of bonuses to any of those skills, and one edge. The Narrator should eventually give your the character the same. For example, suppose your character starts out as a young Dwarf who wants to become a warrior. After an adventure in which the group fights Orcs several times, in addition to gaining some experience points, the Dwarf might also earn four ranks worth of order skill picks. In effect, he is catching up by learning quickly under pressure.

Greater still than their skill with bow and blade is their woodcraft, for they live in untamed lands, and as children they learn how to survive in the wilds, hide from those who hunt them, and track both beast and man. Whether he makes his home in the icy wastes of the North, the depths of an ancient forest, a mountain fastness claimed by no king, or the burning sands of the South, the barbarian knows how to live as part of the land.

The best-known barbarian in the annals of the West is Ghân-buri-Ghân, the chieftain of the Drúedain of Drúadan Forest in Gondor, who helped the Rohirrim come to the aid of Minas Tirith during the War of the Ring. Many other of his folk belong to this order as well. So too do some uncivilized peoples of the East, who live under the sway of the Shadow, and many Orcs.

ADVENTURES

Barbarians rarely fare abroad in search of adventure, for life suits them best when they stay in the regions they call home. Instead, adventure comes to them—as when the Rohirrim sought Ghân-buri-Ghân's help, or Arvedui, last king of Arnor, lived among the Lossoth. But at times, the schemes of the Enemy force noble-hearted barbarians to leave their homes and go on quests to ensure the safety and prosperity of their people, and perhaps even to work with like-minded folk of other ways.

ADVANCING

Most barbarians are content to remain in this order for all their lives, finding it suits them. Those of greatest skill may become archers or rangers or, within their own societies, captains. As they age, some become craftsmen if the arts of painting and carving are esteemed among their people, as they are among the Drúedain. Others, who through kind fortune meet and work with outside peoples, may become warriors, adopting the weapons and ways of fellow foes of the Enemy.

GAME INFORMATION

ATTRIBUTES

The most common favoured attribute for the barbarian is Vitality. The favoured reaction is usually Stamina. Barbarians also consider Strength important. In fact, as a requisite for belonging to this order, a character must have both Strength and Vitality of 6 or higher. Among peoples such as the Drúedain who use archery or thrown weapons, Nimbleness also is held in high regard, as is Perception, a crucial attribute for folk who depend on hunting and tracking for much of their livelihood.

Dwarves, Elves of the West, Hobbits, and Dúnedain may not become barbarians. Wild Men, some Easterlings, and some Orcs most commonly belong to this order.

SKILLS AND TRAITS

Order Skills

The order skills for the barbarian are: Armed Combat (Nim), Climb (Str), Craft (Nim), Jump (Str), Mimicry (Brg), Observe (Per), Ranged Combat (Nim), Ride (Brg), Run (Str), Stealth (Nim), Survival (Per), Swim (Str), Track (Wit), and Weather-sense (Per).

Barbarian Packages

When you create a barbarian, select one of the following packages. Your character automatically receives the skills listed under 'Order Skills.' You may then add five free picks to those skills or any other order skills. Lastly, you may pick one of the edges listed for the package. You may take one or more flaws as well (maximum of four). Each flaw allows you to add +1 to one skill or pick one extra edge.

BASIC BARBARIAN: This package represents a typical barbarian hailing from anywhere in Middle-earth.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +2, Climb +1, Observe +2, Run +1, Stealth +3, Survival +3, Track +3.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Doughty, Hardy, Tireless, Wary, Woodcrafty.

DRÚADAN TRIBESMAN: As a member of a tribe of the oft-feared and misunderstood Woses, you have an obligation to use your crafts and knowledge to aid your fellows.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +1, Climb +1, Observe +1, Ranged Combat +2, Run +1, Stealth +3, Survival (Forest) +3, Track +3.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Accurate, Dodge, Night-eyed, Wary, Woodcrafty.

SOUTHRON NOMAD: The southern deserts are harsh and cruel, but you and your people have learned to survive there, avoiding dangerous wild beasts and raiding Haradrim alike.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +2, Observe +2, Ranged Combat +2, Run +2, Stealth +2, Survival (Southern Wastes) +3, Track +2.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Hardy, Keen-eyed, Sense of Direction, Tireless, Woodcrafty.

LOSSON TRIBESMAN: Though the bitter hand of Morgoth still afflicts the lands of the far North with cold and snow most of the year, you and your fellow Snowmen know how to survive in the icy wastes.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +2, Observe +2, Ranged Combat +2, Run +2, Stealth +2, Survival (Northern Wastes) +3, Track +2.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Accurate, Hardy, Sense of Direction, Wakefulness, Woodcrafty.

MOUNTAIN FOLK: To most, the mountains are inhospitable and cruel, but you and your folk have learned to survive and thrive there.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +2, Climb +3, Observe +2, Ranged Combat +1, Stealth +2, Survival (Mountains) +3, Track +2

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill

Pick 1 Edge: Doughty, Fell-handed (Mountain Orcs), Swift Recovery, Woodcrafty

ABILITIES

When you create a barbarian, you may make *one* pick from the following special abilities:

Brew Poison

Your skill with plants and herbs, animal organs, and venomous beasts allows you to brew poisons to smear on weapons or introduce into an enemy's food. It takes you one hour to prepare a single dose of poison, enough for one blow or to put in one person's food.

IMPROVEMENT: A single pick in this ability allows you to brew injury or ingested poisons with an onset time of 20 minutes or more, a Potency of ±0, a Treatment of ±0, Vitality-reduction effects, and 1 stage. See 'Poisons,' page 246, for more information. For each additional pick devoted to this ability, you may do one of the following: brew poisons of any type (inhaled poisons automatically have continuous stages), brew poisons with any onset time, increase the Potency TN by +5 (maximum of +20), increase the Treatment TN by +5 (maximum of +20), create deadly or paralyzing poisons, or increase the stages by one step, from 1 to 1/2d6 to 1d6, to 2d6.

Champion

You are one of the chief protectors and warriors of your people, charged with defending your lands and brethren against the attacks of enemies. When you fight to protect your people or lands, or to harm a specific enemy defined when you choose this ability, you receive a +1 bonus to all attack tests and tests to dodge, parry, or block. The Narrator may, in her discretion, apply this bonus to other tests.

Examples of defined enemies include a single other tribe, the Orcs of a particular region or stronghold, or the like.

REQUISITE: Armed Combat 8+ *or* Ranged Combat 8+.

IMPROVEMENT: Additional picks allotted to this ability can improve it in one of two ways. First, you can increase the test result bonus by +1 (maximum of +3). Second, you can add a second defined group of enemies, or broaden one of the groups of defined enemies you can affect to, for example, 'all Easterlings' or 'all Orcs'.

Hard March

You are accustomed to journeying through hard lands and can travel through them as swiftly as ordinary men cross unbroken ground. Choose one type of rough terrain: hills, mountains, marshes, forests, northern wastes, southern wastes, or the like. When travelling through that terrain on foot, you move as if it were 'average' ground (see 'Travelling,' page 251). Of course, this may do you little good if your companions lack your mobility. Nor does this ability allow you to ignore geography altogether. If there's no pass through a range of mountains, for instance, your ability to travel swiftly in mountainous terrain doesn't allow you to cross them.

Marking-Signs

Barbarians are illiterate. While they may understand many tongues, they cannot read written speech. You, however, know the special symbols and signals of your people and can paint or etch them on wood or stone to leave simple messages for your fellows that no one outside your tribe can read.

IMPROVEMENT: A second pick in this ability grants you literacy with one language. You may make further picks to gain literacy in other tongues.

Preferred Weapon

Barbarians sometimes come to favour one weapon above all others, learning to use it with exquisite skill while neglecting other fighting arts. When you choose this ability, define one combat skill (Armed Combat or Ranged Combat) and one specialty weapon for it. You receive a +4 bonus when the specialty applies, rather than the usual +2.

IMPROVEMENT: Each additional pick of this ability for the same skill and specialty increases the specialty bonus by an additional +1 (maximum of +6). You may take this ability multiple times for multiple weapons.

Walk Without Trace

So woodcrafty are you that you can walk through the wilds without leaving tracks or other traces for your enemies to follow. When you choose this ability, define one type of terrain or land: plains, forests, mountains, hills, or the like. When you move through it, you leave so few traces that all attempts to follow your trail suffer a –8 penalty to Track tests.

When using this ability, you move 'stealthily' (at half travel rate; see 'Travelling,' page 251).

REQUISITE: Survival 9+ *or* Track 6+.

IMPROVEMENT: Additional picks can improve this ability in one of two ways. First, they can add more types of terrain this ability affects. Second, they can increase the test result penalty for Track for any one terrain you can move through by –2 (maximum of –12).

CRAFTSMAN

' "Good evening, little master!" he said, bending down.
"What may you be wanting?" '
— Barliman Butterbur,
The Fellowship of the Ring

Skilled with your hands and possessed of a creative, imaginative mind, you can craft wondrous objects, be they clever toys, stout pots, or sharp blades. Under your hands, raw materials seem to come alive, transforming into useful goods or items of treasurable beauty.

Or perhaps you are another type of craftsman altogether, one who serves others in some capacity. You might run an inn, providing others with comfortable room and board, including bread you bake yourself, and ale you brew. Maybe you tend someone's garden or wait upon a noble or mend clothes. Whatever work you have chosen, you do it well and with pride, knowing that it brings pleasure to others.

Craftsmen exist all across Middle-earth. Most Dwarves belong to this order as smiths, masons, and miners, since as a people the Dwarves laud craftsmen above almost all other folk. Gardeners like Sam Gamgee, innkeepers like Barliman Butterbur, and the servants of Théoden and Denethor are also craftsmen.

ADVENTURES

Most craftsmen, particularly those with few or no advancements, don't get involved in adventures. After all, they chose this order because it usually leads to a peaceful, ordinary life. But sometimes, as with Samwise, they get drawn into adventures despite themselves. For example, a craftsman who wants to see a well-known work of his favourite kind, to learn from his fellow craftsmen elsewhere in the world, or to carry his goods to a distant market may find himself caught up in events beyond his control—and thus forced to become a hero.

ADVANCING

Most craftsmen remain in their chosen career throughout their lives, desiring nothing more. But those who are swept up in adventures often must learn new skills or find themselves in unavoidable peril. Many become warriors, since the ability to wield blade and shield stands any adventurer in good stead. Others turn their creative talents to minstrelsy or, on rare occasion, to lore and magic.

GAME INFORMATION

ATTRIBUTES

Nimbleness is often a favoured attribute for craftsmen, since they need deft hands and agile fingers to do their work. Many, particularly those engaged in smithwork, mining, or stonework, value Strength just as

highly, if not more so. Those who often sell their wares or bargain with patrons frequently have to use their Wits and Bearing too. Wisdom is normally the favoured reaction.

SKILLS AND TRAITS

Order Skills

The order skills for the craftsman are: Appraise (Wit), Conceal (Wit), Craft (Nim), Debate (Wit), Games (Nim), Language (Wit), Lore (Wit), Observe (Per), Perform (Brg), Persuade (Brg), Smithcraft (Str), and Stonecraft (Str).

Craftsman Packages

When you create a craftsman, select one of the following packages. Your character automatically receives the skills listed under 'Order Skills.' You may then add five free picks to those skills or any other order skills. Lastly, you may pick one of the edges listed for the package. You may take one or more flaws as well (maximum of four). Each flaw allows you to add +1 to one skill or pick one extra edge.

BASIC CRAFTSMAN: This package represents a typical craftsman with a variety of handy skills, who could come from anywhere in Middle-earth.

Order Skills: Appraise +3, any one Craft +3, any one other Craft +1, Debate (Bargain) +2, Observe +2, Persuade +2, Smithcraft +1, Stonecraft +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Ambidextrous, Craftmaster, Favour of Fortune, Friends, Hoard.

GARDENER: Blessed with the ability to make things grow, you tend plants and fields, increasing both their beauty and their yield.

Order Skills: Appraise (Fruits and Vegetables) +1, Craft: Gardening +3, any one other Craft +2, Games +2, Lore (choose one appropriate subject, such as 'Root Vegetables' or 'Flowers') +2, any one other Lore +1, Observe +2, Persuade +2.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Charmed Life, Craftmaster, Favour of Fortune, Friends, Wise.

INNKEEPER: You run—and perhaps own—an inn, ensuring that patrons' rooms are comfortable and their needs met, and that the food and ale live up to your reputation for setting a superb table.

Order Skills: Appraise +2, Craft: Innkeeping +3, Craft: Brewing (or Baking, your choice) +2, any one other Craft +1, Debate (Bargain) +2, Lore: Local Gossip and Lore +2, Observe +1, Persuade +2.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Craftmaster, Friends, Hoard, Honey-tongued, Wakefulness.

SMITH: Skilled with hammer and tongs, and well used to the heat of the forge, you craft metalwork both beautiful and strong.

Order Skills: Appraise +3, an appropriate Craft (Jewellery, for example) +2, Debate (Bargain) +2, Observe +2, Persuade +2, Smithcraft +3, Stonecraft +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Craftmaster, Doughty, Hardy, Friends, Hoard.

STONEMASON: You know how to quarry, dress, and carve stone, transforming ordinary rock into strong walls and wondrous sculptures.

Order Skills: Appraise +3, an appropriate Craft (Sculpture, for example) +2, Debate (Bargain) +2, Observe +2, Persuade +2, Smithcraft +1, Stonecraft +3.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Craftmaster, Doughty, Hardy, Friends, Hoard.

ABILITIES

When you create a craftsman, you may make *one* pick from the following special abilities:

Enchantment

So skilled are you at crafting objects of beauty and strength that you weave the subtle magic of Middle-earth into them, imbuing them with minor enchantments. When you succeed in creating a masterwork item (see below), you may add a low-powered magical effect to it. Examples include: an up to +2 test result bonus for one appropriate skill (say +2 to Stealth (Sneak) for enchanted boots), virtual unbreakability (item has double or triple its normal 'Health' for purposes of determining if it breaks), durability (item cannot be damaged by fire, water, or other everyday phenomena that would ordinarily ruin it), returning (item makes its way back to you after use, as with Elven-rope [see page 195]), floating (item does not sink in water). The Narrator must approve all enchantments and should exercise his discretion to ensure that enchanted items remain rare and contribute to the flavour and feel of the chronicle. See 'Enchanted Items,' page 192, for more information.

REQUISITES: Appropriate Craft skill 12+, Masterwork, Preservation.

Masterwork

At times, your skill surpasses even its usual high level, allowing you to create items of surpassing quality and beauty. If you achieve an extraordinary success while crafting a weapon or armour, you have created a masterwork.

Masterwork weapons do +1 point of damage, and masterwork armour provides +1 point of protection. Such works are rare indeed, commanding prices far beyond those of ordinary objects—at least triple, if not much more. Likewise, any ordinary items you craft with this ability possess triple the normal value due to the quality of the workmanship and materials used.

REQUISITES: Appropriate Craft skill 8+ and any one other craftsman order ability. You may only create masterworks with a Craft skill that you possess. A character with Smithcraft can forge masterwork swords and armour, but he cannot create masterwork cloaks unless he has Craft: Tailor.

Place of Trade

You own a business or place of commerce of your own, such as an inn, a forge, a tailor's shop in Minas Tirith, or the like. For every full month you work there, you earn a minimum of 2d6 *tharni*. The Narrator can decide that you earn more in any particular month, perhaps working the opportunity into a chapter somehow. (*Note:* This ability may not be a good choice for player characters, since it tends to tie them to a particular location. Consult with your Narrator before selecting it.)

REQUISITE: Appropriate Craft skill 6+.

IMPROVEMENT: For each additional pick devoted to this ability, add +1d6 *tharni* to your monthly income.

Preservation

'[A]nd power of old had wrought upon them, and still they preserved... the mighty likenesses in which they had been hewn.'

— The Fellowship of the Ring

So skilled are you at crafting and shaping objects that they can withstand the ruinous effects of age and weather. Any masterwork items you create suffer no harm from cruellest ravages of time or the harshest wind or rain, remaining always seemingly new, though they can be damaged by attacks.

REQUISITES: Appropriate Craft skill 8+, Masterwork.

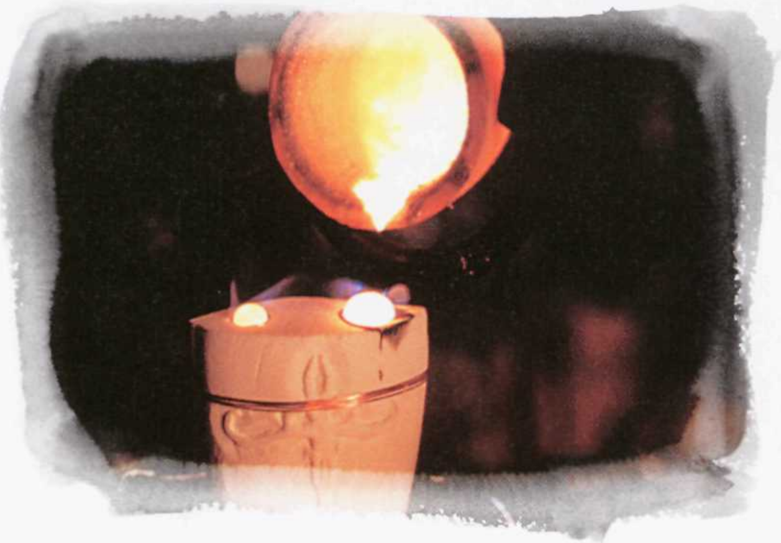
Refuge

Through your skill and careful attention, you have created a small area, such as a garden or inn, where you unconsciously harness the subtle magic of Middle-earth for beneficial effects. Anyone who spends time resting in this area recovers lost Weariness Levels at twice the normal rate (see page 250 for more information on recovering Weariness)

It takes one month of dedicated work to create a Refuge. You must spend at least seven days a month maintaining the Refuge. If for any reason you fail in this duty, the Refuge loses its powers until you spend one month correcting the effects of your neglect. (*Note:* This ability may not be a good choice for player characters, since it tends to tie them to a particular location. Consult with your Narrator before selecting it.)

REQUISITE: Appropriate Craft skill 6+.

IMPROVEMENT: You may allot further picks to this ability. By so doing, you continue to halve the time it takes



to recover a lost Weariness Level there. However, each additional pick doubles the time it takes to create the Refuge, the number of days per month you must tend it, and the number of months required to put it to rights after neglecting it.

Speedy Work

You work swiftly, but without diminishment of skill or quality. By spending 1 Courage, you can create an item in half the time it would normally take, without suffering any test result penalties or requiring any extra degrees of success. The Narrator determines the base time required to create any item, using the guidelines listed for the skills in Chapter Five.

REQUISITE: Appropriate Craft skill 4+.

LOREMASTER

> *'"Less welcome did the Lord Denethor show me then than of old, and grudgingly he permitted me to search among his hoarded scrolls and books."'*
>
> *— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring*

Long indeed is the record of years in Middle-earth, and great the lore that Elves, Men, and Dwarves have gathered to themselves in that time. Though much has been lost to fire and disaster, you are a master of what remains. Learned and wise, you have studied deeply, perhaps travelling many leagues to visit other loremasters or study the books and scrolls kept with care in such places as Rivendell and Minas Tirith. When others look upon a thing in wonder—knowing not what it is—or cannot comprehend the actions of the Enemy, they turn to you, confident that your mastery of lore will provide the answers they seek.

Many of the Wise and their allies are loremasters, for without knowledge wisdom itself is impotent. But lore is not the possession of the Wise only. Many who serve the Shadow belong to this order as well.

ADVENTURES

Many loremasters are solitary, reclusive folk, content to remain inside among their scrolls and tomes, recking little of the world outside their doors, and caring even less for adventures or travel. But some are made of sterner and more curious stuff, and they journey far and wide in their quest to increase their fund of lore. Along the way, adventure may come upon them, whether they wish it or not. In times of trouble—when the Shadow rises—lore is one weapon the forces of the Wise have against it, and they may call on loremasters to help the forces of the West.

ADVANCING

Many loremasters come from lordly or wealthy families and so may become nobles. Since desperate and dangerous times require men of many skills, some loremasters learn the arts of the warrior as well as those of the scholar. And because their learning and wisdom often grant them access to minor magical abilities, loremasters may become magicians—and even wizards, in time.

GAME INFORMATION

ATTRIBUTES

Wits is commonly chosen as a favoured attribute for loremasters, and Wisdom is often picked as the favoured reaction, since those scores reflect their keenness of mind. Many have high Bearing and Perception as well (choosing one as their second favoured attribute), and their Willpower score reflects this. Those who would also be captains of war also need good Strength and Vitality ratings.

SKILLS AND TRAITS

Order Skills

The order skills for the loremaster are: Appraise (Wit), Craft (Nim), Debate (Wit), Games (Nim), Healing (Wit), Inquire (Brg), Insight (Per), Language (Wit), Lore (Wit), Observe (Per), Persuade (Brg), Weather-sense (Per).

Loremaster Packages

When you create a loremaster, select one of the following packages. Your character automatically receives the skills listed under 'Order Skills.' You may then add five free picks to those skills or any other order skills. Lastly, you may pick one of the edges listed for the package. You may take one or more flaws as well (maximum of four). Each flaw allows you to add +1 to one skill or pick one extra edge.

BASIC LOREMASTER: This package represents a typical loremaster who could come from anywhere in Middle-earth.

Order Skills: Debate +3, Healing +1, Insight +1, any one Lore skill +3, any one other Lore skill +2, any one other Lore skill +1, Observe +2, Perform (Compose Verse or other appropriate specialty) +1, Persuade +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Curious, Gift of Tongues, Healing Hands, Honour's Insight, Wise.

ERIADORIAN SAGE: You dwell among the simple, kind-hearted folk of Eriador, assisting them as you may with your learning and wisdom.

Order Skills: Any one Craft +2, Debate +2, Healing +2, Insight +2, any one Lore skill +2, any one other Lore skill +1, Observe +2, Perform (Compose Verse or other appropriate specialty) +1, Persuade +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Curious, Elf-friend, Friends, Healing Hands, Wise.

GONDORIAN SCHOLAR: An inhabitant of Gondor, you have studied the lore of that land for many years.

Order Skills: Debate +2, Insight +3, Lore: History (Gondor) +3, any one other Lore skill +2, any one other Lore skill +1, Observe +1, Perform (Compose Verse or other appropriate specialty) +1, Persuade +2.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Hoard, Honey-tongued, Rank, Stern, Wise.

MINAS TIRITH HEALER: Working with your colleagues at the Houses of Healing, you have learned much about soothing the pain of wounds and the fires of fever.

Order Skills: Healing +3, Insight +1, Language: Quenya +2, Lore: History (Gondor) +2, Lore: Herbs +3, any one other Lore skill +1, Observe +2, Persuade +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Friends, Gift of Tongues, Healing Hands, Resolute, Wise.

RIVENDELL SCHOLAR: Master Elrond has given you leave to live in Imladris, speak with his people, and study the lore he has gathered there.

Order Skills: Debate +1, Healing +1, Insight +1, Language (any one Elvish tongue) +2, Lore: History (Elves) +3, any one other Lore skill +2, any one other Lore skill +1, Observe +2, Perform (Compose Verse or other appropriate specialty) +1, Persuade +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Curious, Elf-friend, Gift of Tongues, Healing Hands, Wise.

WISE-WOMAN: Among some folk, such as certain Easterling and Haradrim peoples, it is the only women who study tribal or clan lore. You are such a woman, well versed in the wisdom of the ages.

Order Skills: Debate +2, Healing +1, Insight +1, any one Lore skill +3, any one other Lore skill +2, any one other Lore skill +1, Observe +2, Persuade +1, Weather-sense +2.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Ally, Eloquent, Hardy, Honey-tongued, Wise.

ABILITIES

When you create a loremaster, you may make *one* pick from the following special abilities:

Ancient Scripts

Throughout the three ages of Middle-earth, the Free Peoples have created dozens, if not hundreds, of tongues and scripts, but most are now lost, even to the masters of lore. Not so to you, who have made a special study of speech and writing. Though you may not be well versed in any of the ancient tongues, through long and diligent study you can decipher them.

Deciphering an unknown script (one for which the character does not possess a Language skill) takes a long time—as much as an hour to a day per paragraph translated—and requires uninterrupted effort and study. At the end of that time, the character makes a Wits test. The TN for the test depends upon the complexity of the writing studied: 10 for simple texts (typical records, tales, or histories), 15 for complex texts (detailed records of advanced or technical subjects, such as battle reports), and 20 for very complex texts (magical lore). He receives a +1 test result bonus for each Language skill he has (at any level, native or non-native). If he achieves a marginal success, he understands the gist of what he has read, but he may miss some pertinent details. If he scores a complete success, he has a better understanding of what he has read, but he may not know the meaning of a few phrases here and there. If he scores a superior success, he knows what it is that he has read, and he is confident that his understanding of it is nearly complete, barring a few words. If he achieves an extraordinary success, he can read and understand the entire text without mishap.

REQUISITES: At least two Language skills—other than the character's native tongues—at 4+.

Expertise

Among all the wise men of Middle-earth, you are specially known for your expertise on a particular subject. Few loremasters can match your mastery of that body of lore. Select one general subject, such as 'Orcs' or 'Gondor' or 'Rings of Power.' When you make any test the Narrator deems to involve knowledge of that subject—not just Language and Lore tests—you receive a +2 test result bonus.

REQUISITE: A Lore skill of 8+, in that same subject.

IMPROVEMENT: You may pick this ability multiple times. Each additional pick increases the bonus by +2 (maximum of +6).

Scroll Hoard

Through long years of careful searching and purchasing, or perhaps as an inheritance from your master, you have acquired an extensive library of books, scrolls, and other records of learning. When you have the opportunity and time to read through them while seeking an answer to some question, you receive a +2 bonus to any corresponding Language or Lore skill tests.

IMPROVEMENT: You may pick this ability multiple times. Each additional pick increases the bonus by +2 (maximum of +6).

Secretive

Some loremasters, stubborn and proud, scorn to reveal their lore to others, even when those who seek knowledge without effort try to intimidate them. Either they keep quiet, resisting all blandishments and threats, or they provide subtle, evasive answers that tell the questioner nothing of value.

If you choose this ability, you may add your Wits modifier to all Willpower tests you must make. When you use Willpower to try to resist efforts to force you to divulge your lore, *double* your Wits bonus before adding it.

Spellcasting

This ability allows a loremaster to cast spells, though his powers of magic are weaker than those of the magician or wizard. Each time a loremaster picks this ability, he gets two *spell picks*. He uses these spell picks to acquire new spells and improve the ones he already knows. See Chapter Seven for more information.

REQUISITES: Wits 10+, any two other loremaster abilities

IMPROVEMENT: A loremaster may pick this ability more than once, each time acquiring two more spell picks.

Vala Virtue

In these twilight days, few among the peoples of Middle-earth remember or revere the Valar. You are different. You not only pay homage to them according to the ancient forms, but through your study of their lore and devotion to them you have developed a particular affinity for one of them. You have, in a sense, come to embody the virtues and qualities that Vala represents, and as such you attract more of that Vala's attention than the average person. When you call upon that Vala by name, for inspiration or to ward off evil, you achieve a greater effect than others can.

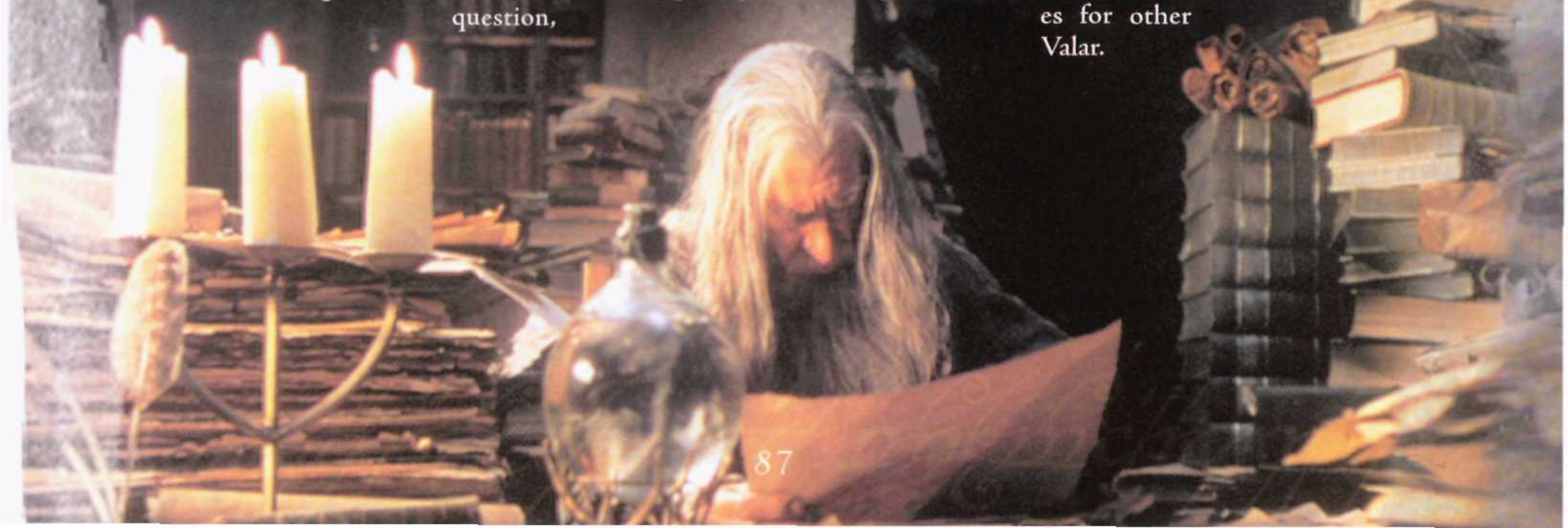
This ability has several effects. First, if a loremaster invokes the power of words to heighten Courage (see page 53), he gets a +5 bonus, instead of the usual +4. Second, if he does so to provide inspiration, he grants a +3 bonus, instead of the normal +2.

Third, you must select one Vala whose virtues your loremaster best embodies. It is this Vala he usually calls upon to get the bonuses described above, and he receives other benefits for this, as follows:

ELBERETH: +2 bonus for all tests to resist sorcery or other spells cast by evil powers (the Witch-king, the Mouth of Sauron, Saruman, and so on).

OROMË: +2 bonus to Survival and Ride tests, and to Armed or Ranged Combat tests for hunting wild beasts

If desired, Narrators can easily create similar bonuses for other Valar.



MAGICIAN

'It was plain that many people regarded them now as the companions of a travelling magician of unknown powers and purpose.'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

In most parts of Middle-earth, there live people who possess strange powers of dweomercraft. Able to call upon or control the subtle magic of the world at will, they can cast spells which create fire, shatter objects, lock doors, and display many other powers. The common folk often shun or avoid them, regarding them as odd and even dangerous. A few of these—who serve the Shadow—truly are dangerous, for they have studied the dark arts of sorcery and mastered powers that cause even other magicians to tremble with loathing and fear.

Magicians (sometimes referred to as conjurors) are uncommon in Middle-earth and rarely enter the chronicles of the West. A few folk, such as the foul Mouth of Sauron, are known to have studied the arcane arts, and powers attributed to others may indicate that they can cast spells.

See Chapter Seven for more information on magicians and magic.

ADVENTURES

Many magicians are reclusive, preferring to stay among their precious tomes and work-rooms, delving ever deeper for the secrets of magic and power. But some are cut from a more adventurous cloth and go out into the world to seek strange new herbs, visit other members of their brotherhood, or search among ancient ruins for long-forgotten books and artifacts. These quests often lead to other, greater, quests and adventures.

Though most groups of adventurers don't count a magician among their number, practitioners of the arcane arts often find it worthwhile to associate with other daring folk. Warriors can protect magicians from Orcs and fell beasts encountered in explorations, and rogues may help these same magicians find and recover hidden treasures of lore. Because most spells are not effective in combat—and casting them tends to weary the magician—he often plays a support role, assisting his comrades with lore and minor magics while allowing them to take the lead in dangerous situations.

ADVANCING

Most magicians desire to become wizards once they have achieved sufficient lore and power that they can attract the notice of the Five Wizards and gain their tutelage. But some, driven by other responsibilities or practicalities, take on the role of noble or warrior.

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GAME INFORMATION

ATTRIBUTES

The most common favoured attribute for magicians is Wits. To become a magician, much less a wizard, one requires the keenness of mind and insight that high Wits brings. Because the power of many spells depends partly on Bearing, many magicians have high scores in that attribute as well, which suits their general temperament. Magicians also find that being observant (having a high Perception) is useful. Willpower is often the magician's favoured reaction. His Wisdom is likewise high in most cases.

Magicians differ from race to race. The stereotypical magician—with his incantations and tomes of lore—is most commonly a Man. Elvish magicians tend to focus on magical abilities (see page 170), since those are more in tune with their nature than actual spellcasting. Dwarf magicians favour the rune method of spellcasting (see page 161). Hobbit magicians are rare, at best, and more like their Mannish compatriots than Elves or Dwarves. They often concentrate on magics useful for comfort and entertainment.

SKILLS AND TRAITS

Order Skills

The order skills for the magician are: *Appraise* (*Wit*), *Craft* (*Nim*), Debate (Wit), Healing (Wit), Inquire (Brg), Insight (Per), Inspire (Brg), Intimidate (Brg), Language (Wit), Lore (Wit), Observe (Per), Persuade (Brg), Ride (Brg), Search (Per), Weather-sense (Per).

Magician Packages

When you create a magician, select one of the following packages. Your character automatically receives the skills listed under 'Order Skills.' You may then add five free picks to those *skills or any other order skills. Lastly,* you may pick one of the edges listed for the package. You may take one or more flaws as well (maximum of four). Each flaw allows you to add +1 to one skill or pick one extra edge.

BASIC MAGICIAN: This package represents a typical magician who could come from anywhere in Middle-earth.

Order Skills: Healing +1, Insight +1, Intimidate +2, any one Language +2, any one other Language +1, any one Lore skill +3, any one other Lore skill +2, *Observe* +2, *Persuade* +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Armour of Heroes, Charmed Life, Curious, Strong-willed, Wise.

WIZARD'S APPRENTICE: *You have* spent years studying with a wizard, learning his lore and magic and hoping to one day to become a wizard yourself.

Order Skills: Debate +1, Healing +1, Inquire +1, Insight +1, Inspire +1, Intimidate +2, any one Language +1, any one other Language +1, any one Lore skill +3, any one other Lore skill +1, Observe +1, Persuade +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Curious, Strong-*willed, Valiant, Valour, Wise.*

STUDENT OF THE SECRET ARTS: Irresistibly drawn to the lure of magic, you have devoted your years and resources to developing your powers and to studying bodies of eldritch lore.

Order Skills: Debate +2, Intimidate +2, any one Language +2, any one other Language +1, any one Lore skill +3, any one other Lore skill +2, Observe +1, Persuade +2.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Ally, Curious, Honey-*Tongue, Rank, Strong-willed.*

TRAVELLING MAGICIAN: Instead of settling down to study the magical arts in peace, you travel from place to place, using your skills to aid those in need, occasionally working wonders *as you go.*

Order Skills: Healing +1, Insight +1, Intimidate +1, any one Language +2, any one other Language +1, any one Lore skill +3, any one other Lore skill +2, Observe +2, Persuade +2.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Armour of Heroes, Charmed Life, Curious, Friends, Wise.

TRIBAL MAGICIAN: You serve as the magic-worker for your tribe, be they Drúedain, Easterlings, *Haradrim, or the like.*

Order Skills: Healing +1, Insight +1, Intimidate +2, any one Language +1, any one Lore skill +3, any one other Lore skill +2, Observe +2, Persuade +2, Weather-sense +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Curious, Friends, Hardy, Wise, Woodcrafty.

ABILITIES

When you create a magician, you *may make one pick from the following* special abilities:

Spellcasting

This ability, the hallmark of the magician, *must* be taken first, before any other ability. It reflects the magician's ability to cast spells and manipulate the magic of Middle-earth. Each time a magician picks this ability, he gets five *spell picks.* He uses these spell picks to acquire new spells, and improve the ones he already knows. See 'Spells,' page 167, for details.

IMPROVEMENT: A *magician may* pick this ability more than once, each time acquiring five more spell picks.

Dwimmer-Crafty

You have practiced casting a particular spell extensively, becoming better at using it than other magicians. Select one spell to which this ability applies. When you cast that spell, you do +2 points of damage with it, gain a +2 test result bonus to any tests made with it, or receive a +2 bonus on your Stamina tests to resist Weariness from it. You must choose one of these effects when you pick this ability, and you cannot vary it thereafter.

REQUISITE: Spellcasting.

IMPROVEMENT: You may pick this ability multiple times, with each additional pick applying to a different spell or a different effect on a spell you've already chosen. You cannot apply more than one pick to the same effect on any given spell.

Sanctum

You possess a sanctum, a place of power and refuge. This could be a strange mansion in the wilds (such as the Last Homely House), a tower in a city or town, a cave, or anything other sort of place the Narrator approves. The sanctum cannot cover more than half a square mile for every point of Bearing you possess. (*Note:* This ability may not be a good choice for player characters, since it tends to tie them to a particular location. Consult with your Narrator before selecting it.)

REQUISITE: Spellcasting.

IMPROVEMENT: For each additional pick devoted to this ability, you have another sanctum in an additional location, or you may double the size of an existing sanctum.

Sanctum Power

So familiar are you with the lands surrounding a sanctum of yours, and so attuned to the subtle magics of Middle-earth there, that you can exert some control over them if the need arises. By making a Bearing test, you can raise or lower the temperature slightly, control the ebb and flow of any bodies of water (perhaps even causing a raging flood, if necessary), direct the course and strength of the winds as you choose, and so forth. The accompanying table lists possible things you can do, and the TNs for each. The Narrator and player should work together to develop other uses for this power if necessary.

TABLE 4.1: SANCTUM POWER

POWER	BEARING TEST TN
Raise/disperse fog (see 'Physical Test Modifiers,' page 218, for effects)	7
Control/strengthen/diminish winds (up to a −3 test result penalty on all Ranged Combat)	7
Make undergrowth inhibit movement (halves all movement)	9
Raise/lower water (may interfere with or aid sailing or fording)	8
Cause flooding	12
Improve/worsen weather (may interfere with travel or tests)	7

This ability works best when you use it to manifest the subtle magic of Middle-earth in evocative, flavourful ways. It's not meant as an absolute form of guardianship or an invulnerable bulwark against invaders. Causing a deadly flood, such as Elrond did when the Ringwraiths tried to cross the Fords of Bruinen (or as Arwen did in *The Fellowship of the Ring* film), should be rare and difficult.

The exact game effects of this ability are up to the Narrator. The player suggests a possible use of the power—'I want to make all the plants and trees interfere with the Orcs' movement, slowing them down and tripping them'—and the Narrator decides whether it lies within the scope of the ability. If it does not, she may suggest a lesser, related use or require a Weariness test (similar to casting a spell) against an appropriate TN to summon up the strength necessary to do what the player wants.

REQUISITES: Spellcasting, Sanctum

IMPROVEMENT: You may pick this ability multiple times if you have multiple sanctums to which you may apply it.

Spellcasting Method

You have learned or developed a special way of casting spells, either through runes or songs of power (see page 161). You may, if you choose, cast some spells using one of those other methods instead of the usual method of gestures and incantations.

REQUISITE: Spellcasting.

IMPROVEMENT: You may pick this ability a second time, thus learning all three ways of casting spells: standard, songs, and runes.

Spell Specialty

You have focused your study of magic on particular areas of lore, such as fire or beasts. Select one type of spell specialty. These are listed on page 161. When casting spells of that type or in that manner, you gain a +2 bonus to any tests needed to cast the spell, including attack rolls to hit targets, and Stamina tests to resist Weariness.

REQUISITE: Spellcasting.

IMPROVEMENT: You may pick this ability multiple times, thus developing many different specialties.

Wizard's Heart

You possess great endurance and willpower which allows you to cast more spells without difficulty than most magicians can. You receive a +2 bonus on Stamina tests to resist Weariness caused by spellcasting or the use of magic powers.

REQUISITE: Sanctum.

MARINER

'[T]hey beheld a fleet borne up on the wind: dromunds, and ships of great draught with many oars, and with black sails bellying in the breeze.'
— The Return of the King

From the Elven-ships berthed at the Grey Havens in the Gulf of Lhûn far to the North, to the black ships of the Corsairs moored at the quays of Umbar in the deep South, sea vessels and sea-craft have been a part of the lives of the Free Peoples of Middle-earth since the earliest days. The Elves sail to the lands across the Sea, the men of Númenor sailed back to Endor in great fleets, and the Galadhrim journey on the Anduin in their swan-shaped boats. In both Gondor and Umbar, Men still maintain an ancient tradition of the sailing arts.

Mariners live in all the coastal regions of Middle-earth, at times venturing inland up the great rivers, such as Anduin and Gwathló. A landsman who spends time along the coast or in the service of naval powers such as Gondor may learn a thing or two of the trade.

ADVENTURES

Some would say that merely going out upon the sea in ships is a great adventure, one so intoxicating that it draws men such as Tar-Aldarion of Númenor and the Ship-kings of Gondor to it regardless of what it costs them. But mariners may come to adventures of another sort when the Shadow threatens the coast or stirs up the Corsairs against Gondor. They may even assist other adventurers who need to travel swiftly and do not trust to the land for whatever reason. But even away from the waters and their ships, mariners are worthy members of adventuring groups, for they are stout-hearted and true, well used to the rigours of the wild from many hours spent on deck.

ADVANCING

Some mariners go on to study soldiery, applying what they have already learned of warcraft to become true warriors. Others, particularly those who are already nobles, advance and become captains, leading their fellows on long journeys and into battle.

GAME INFORMATION

ATTRIBUTES

Strength is often chosen as a favoured attribute for mariners. Swiftness is picked as the favoured reaction because of all the climbing, jumping, and even fighting they must do. But Nimbleness and Wits are not far behind, for ship-work requires agility, and only the cleverest sailors can learn the full arts of sea-craft.

Dwarves, Hobbits, and Wild Men cannot become mariners without Narrator permission.

SKILLS AND TRAITS

Order Skills

The order skills for the mariner are: Acrobatics (Nim), Armed Combat (Nim), Climb (Str), Craft (Nim), Games (Nim), Jump (Str), Observe (Per), Ranged Combat (Nim), Run (Str), Sea-craft (Wit), Swim (Str), Weather-sense (Per).

Mariner Packages

When you create a mariner, select one of the following packages. Your character automatically receives the skills listed under 'Order Skills.' You may then add five free picks to those skills or any other order skills. Lastly, you may pick one of the edges listed for the package. You may take one or more flaws as well (maximum of four). Each flaw allows you to add +1 to one skill or pick one extra edge.

BASIC MARINER: This package represents a typical mariner who could come from anywhere in Middle-earth.

Order Skills: Acrobatics +1, Armed Combat +2, Climb +2, any one Craft skill +1, Games +1, Jump +1, Sea-craft +3, Swim +3, Weather-sense +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Ambidextrous, Doughty, Hardy, Keen-eyed, Sense of Direction.

FISHERMAN: You live on the sea-coast, and spend your days catching fish to feed your family and people.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +1, Climb +1, Craft: Netmaking (or other appropriate Craft) +3, Games +1, Jump +1, Run +1, Sea-craft (Boating) +3, Swim +3, Weather-sense +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Craftmaster, Doughty, Hardy, Keen-eyed, Sense of Direction.

NAVY: You serve Gondor, or some other realm, as a sailor or naval officer.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +2, Climb +2, any one Craft skill +1, Jump +1, Ranged Combat +2, Run +1, Sea-craft +3, Swim +2, Weather-sense +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Ally, Command, Rank, Stern, Warwise.

RIVERMAN: You live by the banks of the Great River, or some lesser river, fishing and hunting to survive.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +2, Climb +1, any one Craft skill +2, Games +1, Jump +1, Ranged Combat +2, Sea-craft (Boating) +3, Swim +3.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Doughty, Hardy, Keen-eyed, Tireless, Woodcrafty.

SHIPWRIGHT: You have learned the art of crafting ships so that you can shape wood to your will to create sturdy sailing craft.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +1, Climb +2, Craft: Sailmaking +2, Jump +1, Ranged Combat +1, Run +1, Sea-craft +3 (Shipwright), Swim +3, Weather-sense +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Craftmaster, Dodge, Elf-friend, Friends, Keen-eyed.

ABILITIES

When you create a mariner, you may make *one* pick from the following special abilities:

Diver

You are a strong swimmer, accustomed to rough waters and to diving underwater for long times. You may hold your breath for +1 minute before suffering the effects of drowning (see page 245), and you receive a +2 bonus to all Swim tests.

Requisite: Strength or Vitality 6+.

Improvement: Each additional pick allotted to this ability extends the amount of time you can hold your breath by +1 minute and provides an additional +1 bonus to Swim tests.

Rope-craft

Sailors use rope every single day to lash down cargos, control the sails, and climb up into the rigging. You are particularly skilled at tying knots, splicing, and other rope-related tasks. When you make any skill test involving ropes (including climbing them), you receive a +4 bonus. If no *skill* applies, you receive a +4 bonus to any appropriate test, such as a Nimbleness test to tie up a prisoner.

REQUISITE: Nimbleness 6+.

Sailor's Eye

More so even than for soldiers, weather is an important factor in a mariner's life. Fortunately for your ship, you have a particular talent for reading the weather, allowing you to avoid—or at least prepare for—deadly storms. You receive a +4 bonus to all Weather-sense tests made while on or near the water.

REQUISITE: Weather-sense +4.

Sea Legs

Landsmen often find shipboard life uncomfortable. They can't keep their balance on a rocking deck, and the movement of the ship makes them queasy and ill. You experience no such problems, having gained your sea legs through experience. You do not suffer the −2 (or greater) test result penalty to Nimbleness-related tests that others do, and never have to make Stamina tests to resist seasickness.

Ship

You possess a ship of your own, with sufficient crew to sail her safely. Typically this means a trading ship, but with the Narrator's permission it may be a warship, particularly if you are also a noble. The player and the Narrator must work together to determine the size and capabilities of the character's ship. This should be at least partly in line with the character's wealth and power. Otherwise, the character is likely to find his ship taken from him by pirates or mutineers.

The Narrator creates and runs the crewmen as NPCs. These crewmen are there to operate the ship as a transport, not to serve as henchmen for the character and his companions. They may be willing to help out in dire need, but they are not adventurers themselves and probably have no desire to be. NPC crewmen who are ordered to do things they're not comfortable with often refuse to comply or simply quit.

REQUISITES: Sea-craft +7, any other mariner ability.

IMPROVEMENT: For each additional pick devoted to this ability, you have one more ship.

Wind-mastery

Through years of experience, you have learned how to read the winds and use them to best effect. When you travel by water on a craft with sails, you can improve the ship's speed by 25%.

REQUISITE: Sea-craft +8.

IMPROVEMENT: You may pick this ability a second time, so that you can increase a sailing ship's speed by 50%.

MINSTREL

'[A] minstrel of Gondor stood forth... And he sang to them, now in the Elven-tongue, now in the speech of the West, until their hearts...overflowed[.]'
— The Return of the King

From cleverly composed verse to songs sung with wondrous beauty to the playing of harp and viol and drum and flute, the peoples of Middle-earth love music and word-play in all their forms. The chief practitioners of those arts are minstrels, people who have trained many years in the playing of instruments and singing of songs.

The verses and music of a skilled minstrel can sway hardened men to tears, inspire soldiers to fight harder and longer, and bring succour and comfort to the sick and weary. Music represents a common lifeblood that runs through and unites many of the disparate cultures and peoples of Middle-earth.

ADVENTURES

It is the task of minstrels most often to chronicle the lives of adventurers, not to take part in bold deeds themselves. But some troubadours are not content with creating their lays from the recounting of those who were present at a battle or who helped a hero complete his quest. They want to be there themselves, witnessing what occurs firsthand, so that their tales and songs are the more accurate. This curiosity, this drive for the perfection of the art, has led more than one minstrel to go on adventures. Many minstrels also find inspiration in their own songs, drawing upon tales of heroes and heroic deeds to become heroes themselves.

Groups of adventurers consider minstrels good companions for many reasons. Not only do they provide entertainment and comfort on the road, but they can lighten gloom and despair with their music and stories. Their glib tongues and winning ways also make them valuable allies when adventurers must treat with nobles and courtiers or wheedle information from reluctant folk. A minstrel can handle many a delicate situation that a barbarian, warrior, or even magician would ruin.

ADVANCING

Most minstrels, finding their craft both demanding and rewarding, prefer to remain in the same order all their lives. But some, including those who find themselves involved in adventures, choose a different path. Exposure to the dangers of the wilderness may lead them to learn the fighting skills of the warrior, or as they become more and more versed in the lore of Middle-earth they may study with a magician. A few, taking advantage of their ability to make friends easily, become spies for one power or another.

GAME INFORMATION

ATTRIBUTES

Bearing is normally a favoured attribute for a minstrel, since it reflects his capacity for impressing audiences, filling his music with passion and fire, and even remaining of good cheer in the face of peril. But Nimbleness (for the deft plucking of harp strings and playing of games) and Wits (to help him remember all the songs and lore he learns) are also important. Many minstrels also value Perception, since that attribute helps them gather information and remain alert at all times. Wisdom is often the favoured reaction.

SKILLS AND TRAITS

Order Skills

The order skills for the minstrel are: Acrobatics (Nim), Climb (Str), Craft (Nim), Debate (Wit), Games (Nim), Inquire (Brg), Inspire (Brg), Language (Wit), Legerdemain (Nim), Lore (Wit), Mimicry (Brg), Observe (Per), Persuade (Brg), Run (Str), Stealth (Nim).

Minstrel Packages

When you create a minstrel, select one of the following packages. Your character automatically receives the skills listed under 'Order Skills.' You may then add five free picks to those skills or any other order skills. Lastly, you may pick one of the edges listed for the package. You may take one or more flaws as well (maximum of four). Each flaw allows you to add +1 to one skill or pick one extra edge.

BASIC MINSTREL: This package represents a typical minstrel who could come from anywhere in Middle-earth.

Order Skills: Any one Craft +1, Debate +1, Games +1, Inspire +1, any one Language +2, any one other Language +1, any one Lore skill +1, Mimicry +1, Perform +3, Persuade +2, Stealth +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Favour of Fortune, Friends, Gift of Tongues, Honey-tongued, Keen-eyed.

GONDORIAN MINSTREL: Steeped in the lore and verse of the realm of Gondor, you entertain its lords and ladies with your well-trained voice and exquisite playing.

Order Skills: Debate +1, Games +1, Inspire +2, Legerdemain +1, Lore: History (Gondor) +2, Mimicry +2, Perform +3, Persuade +2, Stealth +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Curious, Dodge, Friends, Honey-tongued, Keen-eyed.

PERFORMER: You travel the land, seeing the wonders of Middle-earth and having adventures as you use your many skills as an entertainer to earn a few pennies.

Order Skills: Acrobatics +2, Games +2, Legerdemain +3, Mimicry +1, Perform +3, Persuade +2, Ranged Combat +1, Stealth +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Charmed Life, Favour of Fortune, Friends, Honey-tongued, Keen-eyed.

ROHIRIC BARD: You play and sing for the warriors of the Rohirrim, using your musical abilities to teach, inspire, and entertain.

Order Skills: Debate +1, Games +1, Inspire +3, Lore: History (Rohan) +3, Mimicry +1, Perform +3, Persuade +2, Stealth +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Ally, Friends, Hardy, Honey-tongued, Keen-eyed.

TRIBAL CHANTER: You serve your people, be they Drúedain, Easterlings, or Haradrim, as one learned in the ancient songs and rhymes, which provide both wisdom and joy.

Order Skills: Any one Craft +1, Inspire +2, Legerdemain +1, Lore: Tribal Lore +2, any one other Lore +1, Mimicry +1, Perform +3, Persuade +2, Stealth +2.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Ally, Friends, Hardy, Honey-tongued, Keen-eyed.

ABILITIES

When you create a minstrel, you may make *one* pick from the following special abilities:

Gladden

Your words and music are so soothing that those who listen to you take great comfort from them. Make a Perform test against TN 10. If you succeed, while you play or sing, anyone who spends time resting and listening to you recovers lost Weariness Levels at twice the normal rate (see page 250 for additional information). Thus, you must perform for at least one hour for this ability to have any effect. Since you are working, you cannot recover Weariness Levels at this accelerated rate, but you can recover them at the normal rate.

This ability only affects characters who can hear you perform. If something prevents that—deafness or unconsciousness, for example—the 'listener' cannot recover Weariness at the faster rate.

REQUISITE: Perform +4.

Inspiring Performance

When need requires, you can play and sing so that your music enheartens and inspires all of your comrades and allies who hear you. Make a Perform test against TN 10. With a marginal success, you receive a bonus to Inspire equal to +1 while you perform. Add another +1 for each additional level of success. You may make Inspire tests while continuing to perform.

This ability only affects characters who can hear you perform. If something prevents that—the noise of battle, for example—you cannot apply the Inspire bonus to interactions with people who can't hear you. .

REQUISITE: Perform +6.

Jugglery

To your repertoire of music and poetry, you have added the arts of the juggler. You can manipulate objects and perform many other tricks with ease and grace, astounding audiences with your cleverness and deft fingers. You receive a +2 bonus with all

Acrobatics, Games, Legerdemain, and Ranged Combat (thrown item) tests.

REQUISITE: Nimbleness 6+.

Natural Talent

From the minute you first picked up an instrument, tried your hand at composing verse, or used your quick wits and silver tongue to convince others, you proved to have a natural talent for the bardic arts. When you spend Courage on Debate, Persuade, or Perform tests, you gain a +5 bonus per point spent, rather than the normal +3 bonus.

Voice of Power

So powerful is your voice and your spirit that when you utter words of power, you have a greater effect than most folk do. When you use the 'Power of Words' rules (page 163), you achieve a 50% greater effect than what's described in the rules.

REQUISITE: Gladden, Inspiring Performance, Bearing 8+.

Woven Words

So skilled are you, and so resonant the music you make, that you can create an illusion or image of that which you describe with your verse. Make a Perform test against TN 15. If you achieve a marginal or complete success, you create the image, but it is obviously a phantasm. If you achieve a superior or extraordinary success, you may choose to make the illusion you create so thorough that it seems real. Anyone viewing it must make an Observe test, with a TN equal to your test result, to realize it is but an image. Anyone who fails this test thinks whatever it depicts actually exists, and he reacts accordingly. The image still lacks substance. Any who touch it realize at once that it is but an image.

Narrators should monitor the use of this ability closely and work with players to ensure that it contributes to the flavour and fun of the chronicle. When used cleverly, it can provide a significant advantage for a minstrel, but it has its limits. For one, the illusion created must be something sung of, and that restricts what the minstrel can realistically create. There are no songs in Middle-earth about pits suddenly appearing in the ground, walls of ice springing up out of nowhere, or dragons that heed the beck and call of Men. Onlookers automatically realize that an inappropriate illusion is nothing more than an image. For another, the illusions created cannot actually touch or harm anything. Third, the images only last as long as the minstrel keeps playing and singing, and they cannot extend beyond the range of his voice.

REQUISITES: Gladden, Inspiring Performance, Perform 8+.

NOBLE

' "As for me," said Imrahil, "the Lord Aragorn I hold to be my liege-lord, whether he claim it or no. His wish is to me a command." '

— The Return of the King

Throughout the realms and lands of Middle-earth, every people has among it those who hold positions of authority, leadership, and respect. These leaders are known generally as nobles, though they may claim no title or peerage. In some lands, such as Gondor, nobles are born to their positions of privilege, and they hold them according to ancient laws and traditions they dare not break, no matter how powerful they become. The Ruling Steward—Denethor, son of Ecthelion—is just such a man, and his sons Boromir and Faramir are likewise. In other lands, nobles may be chosen by the people or achieve their positions through wealth, accomplishments, or natural qualities of leadership. For example, Bard the Bowman became King of Dale not just because of his ancestry, but because he slew Smaug and protected the people of Esgaroth. In the Shire, most nobles like Bilbo and Frodo simply belong to a landed gentry whose property and wealth set them apart from Hobbits who must work for a living.

ADVENTURES

Nobles tend to be of two types. The first type, comfortable in his position and lacking for little or nothing, leads a life of dissolution and ease. He has no desire to go on adventures. Only when something extraordinary happens—such as Gandalf showing up on Bilbo's doorstep and recruiting him as Thorin's burglar—can he be rousted out of his pleasant lifestyle to take on the dangers of adventuring. The other type regards himself as having duties of rulership and obligations toward those who serve him, and he takes a more active role. This noble is much more likely to become involved in adventures or to befriend adventurers.

ADVANCING

Many nobles remain in that order all of their lives, finding no reason to learn other skills or take on any other role. But others prefer to broaden their perspective and abilities. For example, those whose realms must fight for survival or conquest often become warriors as well, and captains to boot. If they have demesnes in coastal areas, they may learn the mariner's art. Some are drawn by learning and wisdom, becoming loremasters or even magicians.

GAME INFORMATION

ATTRIBUTES

Bearing usually serves as a favoured attribute for nobles, since they need the ability to command others and inspire their followers. Many also find Wits and Perception of great use, since a wise and perceptive leader rules better. But nobles concerned with military matters may find that Strength and Vitality serve them in better stead. Willpower is normally the favoured reaction.

SKILLS AND TRAITS

Order Skills

The order skills for the noble are: Armed Combat (Nim), Craft (Nim), Debate (Wit), Inquire (Brg), Inspire (Brg), Intimidate (Brg), Language (Wit), Lore (Wit), Observe (Per), Persuade (Brg), Ranged Combat (Nim), Ride (Brg).

Noble Packages

When you create a noble, select one of the following packages. Your character automatically receives the skills listed under 'Order Skills.' You may then add five free picks to those skills or any other order skills. Lastly, you may pick one of the edges listed for the package. Your first edge *must* be Rank. You may take one or more flaws (maximum of four). Each flaw allows you to add +1 to one skill or pick one extra edge. Duty, Fealty, and Oath are all common flaws for nobles.

BASIC NOBLE: This package represents a typical noble who could come from anywhere in Middle-earth.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +2, Debate +2, Inquire +1, Inspire +2, Intimidate +2, any one Lore skill +1, Observe +2, Persuade +1, Ride +2.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Command, Healing Hands, Hoard, Rank, Stern.

GONDORIAN LORD: You are a lord of Gondor, commanding the fealty of many men and owing obeisance in turn to the Ruling Steward—and perhaps, one day, the King.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +3, Debate +2, Inspire +2, Intimidate +2, Language: Quenya or Sindarin +1, Lore: History (Gondor) +1, Observe +1, Persuade +1, Ride +2.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Command, Healing Hands, Hoard, Rank, Stern.

ERIADORIAN GENTRY: In one of the peaceful realms of Eriador, you have achieved prominence and a position of leadership due to your wisdom, noble qualities, or wealth.

Order Skills: Debate +2, Inquire +1, Inspire +2, Intimidate +1, any one Language +2, any one Lore skill +2, Observe +2, Persuade +3.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Charmed Life, Friends, Hoard, Honey-tongued, Rank.

LEADER OF FOLK: Thanks to either luck or ability—often skill at arms or oratory—you have become the leader of a group of people by popular acclaim. Though you do not necessarily possess noble blood, you show yourself to be a true leader by the nobility of your actions.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +3, Inspire +2, Intimidate +2, any one Lore skill +1, Observe +2, Persuade +1, Ranged Combat +2, Ride +2.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Armour of Heroes, Command, Hoard, Rank, Stern.

TRIBAL CHIEFTAIN: You are a leader among your people: a chieftain, an elder, a person regarded as wise and capable. But with the power that leadership brings, it also confers a responsibility to see to your people's welfare.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +2, Debate +2, Inquire +1, Inspire +2, Intimidate +2, any one Lore skill +1, Observe +2, Persuade +1, Ride +2.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Ally, Command, Hoard, Rank, Woodcrafty.

ABILITIES

When you create a noble, you may make *one* pick from the following special abilities:

Courtier

Adept at judging social situations, you know how to argue convincingly. You receive a +2 bonus to all Persuade and Debate tests made when trying to convince a king or other person of greater rank than you. Furthermore, if you spend 10 minutes or more with any group of people, you can make an Insight test against a TN set by the Narrator (usually 15) to evaluate the relationships within the group: who defers to whom, who is in charge (or thinks he is), who has romantic feelings for whom, and so forth.

Cross-Order Skill

Nobles often learn many unusual skills or strange bodies of lore as part of their daily tasks. You may choose one non-order skill and treat it like an order skill for the purposes of skill acquisition and advancement.

Deference

One quality in particular tends to set nobles apart from others: The common folk treat them with respect and deference. Whether it takes the form of Sam's respectful behaviour toward Frodo and willingness to help him any way he can, Prince Imrahil's acknowledgment of his duties to Aragorn even without a formal claim, or the simple expectation that a noble will do whatever is right and necessary to keep his people safe, this attitude prevails throughout Middle-earth. Even the subtle magic of the world recognizes the right of nobles to rule their just domains by granting them healing powers and other abilities.

To reflect this attitude of respect and deference, nobles receive a +2 test result bonus with all social skills (except Inspire and Intimidate) used with or against their own people, and a +1 bonus when using social skills with or against other peoples.

REQUISITES: Bearing 6+; appropriate Rank edge and Duty flaw (determined by Narrator).

Domain

You rule over or have great authority within a particular keep, city, kingdom, or other realm. In that area and according to the responsibilities given you, you make and enforce laws, see to the safety and health of your people, keep the army—and perhaps navy—fit for duty, build roads and structures, and otherwise govern as you see fit. (*Note:* This ability may not be a good choice for player characters, since it tends to tie them to a particular location. Consult with your Narrator before selecting it.)

REQUISITES: Appropriate Rank edge and Duty flaw (determined by Narrator).

Noble Mien

Being born into a noble family does not necessarily mean a scion has the gifts of leadership needed to rule well. Fortunately, you do. You have a particularly knack for leading, inspiring, and commanding others. They flock to your banner when you call, and they tremble with shame and fear when you are angry. You receive a +2 bonus to all Inspire and Intimidate tests made with your people.

REQUISITE: Bearing 6+.

ROGUE

'"*And I assure you there was a mark on this door...Burglar wants a good job, plenty of Excitement and reasonable Reward, that's how it is usually read.*"'

— *Glóin, The Hobbit*

Blessed with clever wits and quick hands, you live an unusual and exciting life, lurking in the shadows and awaiting opportunities for gain. Often scorned or shunned by ordinary folk, you may call yourself—or be called—an 'expert treasure-hunter,' burglar, spy, scout, or ruffian. Perhaps you commit crimes, or maybe you take on tasks so unusual and dangerous that other people become suspicious of what you do. Preferring indirect methods to the assaults of the warrior or the tedious learning of the magician, you have skills and abilities members of neither of those more respectable orders would ever dream of—and yet which may save their lives or help them complete their quests if they call on you for help.

ADVENTURES

Every day in the life of a rogue is an adventure. When you live by your wits, you must be prepared for adventure at all times! Whether it's stealing from dragons, spying on the servants of the Enemy (or, for more black-hearted rogues, spying on Sauron's enemies), creeping through ancient ruins in search of treasure, or filching valuables from houses in Minas Tirith, rogues always find enough excitement and danger—and money—to keep them satisfied—at least for a while.

Although characters of more lofty morals and goals may look down on rogues, they often find them invaluable on adventures. Even the stiff-necked Thorin Oakenshield, heir to the greatest house of the Dwarves, had to recruit a lowly rogue—the burglar Bilbo Baggins—to help him infiltrate the Lonely Mountain to obtain Smaug's hoard and bring about the dragon's death. Rogues, particularly the good-hearted sort (which should include almost all player character rogues), often find the company of other adventurers invaluable, since they are not equipped to deal with guardian beasts and other dangers by themselves. In short, each complements the other.

ADVANCING

Rogues have many options open to them besides staying in the same order all of their lives. They can branch out into other basic orders, perhaps learning the skills of warrior, minstrel, or craftsman to augment their roguish abilities. Some of the wiliest rogues go on to become spies, helping their allies or masters keep a close eye on vital people and areas.

GAME INFORMATION

ATTRIBUTES

Most rogues rely on Nimbleness as one of their two favoured attributes, and Swiftness as their favoured reaction. A nimble rogue can sneak and hide more easily, manipulate objects (such as locks) more deftly, and even wield his weapons with greater skill. Likewise, Swiftness is crucial for avoiding traps and dodging attacks. Wits and Perception are almost as important, since a rogue who does not remain alert and cannot think on his feet may have a very short career. Rogues who often climb, run, and jump may favour Strength over Perception.

SKILLS AND TRAITS

Order Skills

The order skills for the rogue are: Acrobatics (Nim), Appraise (Wit), Armed Combat (Nim), Climb (Str), Conceal (Wit), Craft (Nim), Games (Nim), Guise (Wit), Jump (Str), Legerdemain (Nim), Observe (Per), Persuade (Brg), Ranged Combat (Nim), Run (Str), Search (Per), Stealth (Nim), Survival (Per).

Rogue Packages

When you create a rogue, select one of the following packages. Your character automatically receives the skills listed under 'Order Skills.' You may then add five free picks to those skills or any other order skills. Lastly, you may pick one of the edges listed for the package. You may take one or more flaws as well (maximum of four). Each flaw allows you to add +1 to one skill or pick one extra edge.

BASIC ROGUE: This package represents a typical rogue who could come from anywhere in Middle-earth.

Order Skills: Appraise +1, Armed Combat +2, Climb +2, Conceal +2, Inquire +1, Jump +2, Legerdemain +1, Observe +1, Stealth +3.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Dodge, Friends, Furtive, Night-eyed, Wary.

BURGLAR: Skilled at climbing, sneaking, and judging the quality of goods, you have put your abilities to use as an expert treasure-seeker.

Order Skills: Acrobatics +1, Appraise +3, Armed Combat +1, Climb +3, Jump +1, Legerdemain +1, Observe +1, Search +1, Stealth +3.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Ambidextrous, Dodge, Furtive, Keen-eyed, Wary.

OUTLAW: Driven from your home by Orcs or evil men, you became a wolf's-head, a bandit who lives in the wilds and preys upon the servants of the Shadow.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +3, Climb +2, Conceal +2, Observe +2, Ranged Combat +2, Stealth +3, Survival +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Dodge, Friends, Hardy, Strong-willed, Tireless.

LURKER: You sneak around in the shadows, ferreting out information, spying on people, and taking advantage of any opportunities that arise.

Order Skills: Appraise +1, Conceal +2, Guise +2, Inquire +2, Legerdemain +1, Observe +3, Persuade +1, Stealth +3.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Dodge, Friends, Furtive, Honey-tongued, Wary.

PICKPOCKET: You haunt the shops and streets of cities like Minas Tirith, relieving unsuspecting folk of their purses.

Order Skills: Appraise +2, Armed Combat +1, Conceal +2, Inquire +1, Legerdemain +3, Observe +2, Run +1, Stealth +3.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Ambidextrous, Dodge, Friends, Furtive, Wary.

ABILITIES

When you create a rogue, you may make *one* pick from the following special abilities:

Fleet-Footed

You have the swiftness of the wind, enabling you to elude pursuers—or perhaps catch fleeing prey—with ease. You gain a +2 bonus to Run tests. Moreover, you can reduce any physical penalties imposed on your movement tests by one half, rounding down to the nearest whole number.

REQUISITE: Nimbleness 6+.

Lockpicking

You are skilled at the art of picking locks using special tools. To pick a lock, you make a Nimbleness or Legerdemain test (whichever you prefer) against a difficulty set by the Narrator, depending upon the quality and nature of the lock. Without your tools, you suffer the usual modifier for lack of equipment.

REQUISITE: Nimbleness 6+ *or* Legerdemain +6.

Lurking in Shadows

You excel at all stealthy activities: sneaking, hiding in shadows, following people without being suspected, and the like. When you spend a point of Courage on any Stealth test, you receive a +5 bonus instead of the usual +3.

Sanctuary

Unbeknownst to anyone else, you have a place to hide. This could be a few rooms in the basement of a house in Minas Tirith, a cave right off the Greenway in Eriador, an old barrow, a secret room within a castle, or the like. The Narrator must approve all sanctuaries. If someone else suspects the existence of the sanctuary and tries to find it, the difficulty for Observe or Search tests to do so is TN 15. (*Note:* This ability may not be a good choice for player characters, since it tends to tie them to a particular location. Consult with your Narrator before selecting it.)

IMPROVEMENT: For each additional pick allotted to this ability, increase the difficulty to find the sanctuary by +5.

Scoundrel's Fortune

Fortune shines on you. You have far more luck than most people, and it often helps you when you engage in roguish activities. Once per game session, you can re-roll one test with any order skill, adding a +2 bonus to the second roll. You use the better of the two results.

IMPROVEMENT: You can pick this ability multiple times. Each additional pick garners you an additional re-roll per game session.

Treacherous Blow

You have a particular skill at striking down your enemies from behind or by surprise. When you attack in such situations, you receive a +5 bonus on your Armed Combat tests. The Narrator determines whether the bonus applies in any given situation. At best, it usually only applies to the first attack you make against a target.

REQUISITES: Nimbleness 8+, any one other rogue ability.

WARRIOR

'[O]ut of the City came all the strength of men that was in it, and the silver swan of Dol Amroth was borne in the van, driving the enemy from the Gate.'

— The Return of the King

Warriors—brave and doughty individuals trained in the arts of weapon and shield, who fight on behalf of a lord or kingdom against great foes—are far and away the most common of all the types of adventurers found in Middle-earth. From the horsemen of the Rohirrim to the axe-wielding Dwarves to the hordes of Orcs and Easterlings who serve the Dark Lord, warriors participate in all the great events of the world.

In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, for example, Aragorn, Boromir, Legolas, and Gimli are all warriors (at least in part), and by the end of the War of the Ring Sam, Merry, and Pippin all had some skill with the arts of this order as well. Éomer, Éowyn, King Théoden, most Rohirrim, Beregond, Prince Imrahil, and many other friends of the Fellowship are also warriors.

ADVENTURES

Warriors are well-suited to almost any type of adventure, although they are by nature attracted to deeds and callings of a martial bent. Adventures by definition involve danger and usually foes as well, and warriors know how to cope with all types of threats and enemies. Their strong arms, strong wills, and bold attitudes often make them ideal leaders for adventuring groups.

Warriors get along well with most other types of adventurers. Though they may sometimes question the 'shady' methods of rogues or the importance of the lore of magicians, they recognize that all members of the group may have something valuable to contribute to see the quest through to a successful completion.

ADVANCING

Warriors have several paths of advancement open to them. Some become archers, specializing in the use of the bow. Elves, in particular, often choose this elite order. A few warriors have the skill and hardiness to become rangers, patrolling the wilds to protect innocent folk from the perils of the Shadow, but most who lack that ambition simply remain warriors or become knights or captains. Warriors who are also nobles most often choose the latter path.

GAME INFORMATION

ATTRIBUTES

Strength and Stamina normally become a favoured attribute and reaction for warriors, since it is by the power of his sword-arm that a warrior usually triumphs in battle. Vitality and Nimbleness also have great importance. A high score in the former helps a warrior resist the blows of his enemies, while top numbers in the latter improve his accuracy and his ability to dodge. Warriors who would lead and inspire others need a high Bearing, and those who wish to be clever tacticians can benefit from high Wits and Perception.

SKILLS AND TRAITS

Order Skills

The order skills for the warrior are: Armed Combat (Nim), Climb (Str), Healing (Wit), Inspire (Brg), Intimidate (Brg), Jump (Str), Observe (Per), Ranged Combat (Nim), Ride (Brg), Run (Str), Siegecraft (Wit), Stealth (Nim), Survival (Per), Track (Wit).

Warrior Packages

When you create a warrior, select one of the following packages. Your character automatically receives the skills listed under 'Order Skills.' You may then add five free picks to those skills or any other order skills. Lastly, you may pick one of the edges listed for the package. You may take one or more flaws as well (maximum of four). Each flaw allows you to add +1 to one skill or pick one extra edge.

BASIC WARRIOR: This package represents a typical warrior who could come from anywhere in Middle-earth.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +3, Healing +1, Inspire +1, Intimidate +1, Observe +2, Ranged Combat +3, Ride +2, Siegecraft +2.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Bold, Command, Valiant, Warrior's Heart, Warwise.

BOWMAN: Skilled with bow and arrow, you can strike down your enemies from afar.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +1, Healing +1, Jump +1, Observe +3, Ranged Combat +3, Ride +2, Run +1, Siegecraft +1, Survival +1, Track +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Accurate, Armour of Heroes, Quick-draw, Valiant, Warwise.

HORSEMAN: You ride to battle on a swift steed, using your skill as a rider to strike harder blows and outmanoeuvre the enemy.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +3, Healing +1, Inspire +2, Intimidate +2, Observe +2, Ranged Combat +1, Ride +3, Siegecraft +1.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Bold, Fell-handed, Honour's Insight, Warrior's Heart, Warwise.

SCOUT: You rely on the arts of stealth and swiftness as much as on the strength of your arms, using your keen eyes and cleverness to spy out enemy positions.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +2, Healing +1, Observe +3, Ranged Combat +2, Ride +2, Stealth +3, Track +2.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Command, Resolute, Warrior's Heart, Warwise, Woodcrafty.

SENTINEL: Trained to guard fortresses—such as Minas Tirith or Meduseld—camps, and the like, you are known for your keen sight and wariness.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +3, Intimidate +2, Observe +3, Ranged Combat +2, Ride +1, Run +1, Siegecraft +3.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Keen-eared, Keen-eyed, Night-eyed, Wakefulness, Wary.

SHIRRIFF: As a bold and worthy Hobbit, you have become a Shirriff to help keep the peace in the Shire.

Order Skills: Armed Combat +2, Intimidate +1, Observe +3, Ranged Combat +3, Run +3, Stealth +3.

Pick 5 Bonuses: +1 to any order skill.

Pick 1 Edge: Accurate, Dodge, Friends, Keen-eared, Keen-eyed.

REQUISITE: Must be a Hobbit.

ABILITIES

When you create a warrior, you may make *one* pick from the following special abilities:

Battle-Hardened

You are a veteran of many battles and sieges, and you have learned through hard experience how best to achieve victory. Whenever you spend a point of Courage on any Siegecraft test, you receive a +5 bonus instead of the usual +3.

Evasion

Through natural ability and long experience, you have developed great skill in avoiding the blows of your enemies. When you perform a dodge action, you may roll an extra die (3d6 total) for your Swiftness test, keeping the two highest dice. The normal rule for double 6s still applies.

REQUISITE: Nimbleness 6+.

Favoured Weapon

You have spent much of your life training with a particular weapon, bringing your skill with that weapon to nigh-unheard of levels. Choose one combat skill—Armed Combat or Ranged Combat—and specialty. Each advancement pick you devote to that skill and specialty improves it by *two* skill ranks. However, when you use any other specialty within that skill, you suffer a –4 test result penalty.

REQUISITES: Strength 6+, Nimbleness 8+.

IMPROVEMENT: If you have more than one specialty for Armed or Ranged Combat, you may take this ability once for each specialty. You may also take it for both Armed Combat and Ranged Combat.

Swift Strike

You fight with speed and grace, striking blows and dodging counterattacks more quickly than your enemies can follow. You gain one extra combat action per round. Your action allowance becomes 3, instead of the normal 2, but you may only use the extra action for combat, such as attacking or dodging.

REQUISITES: Nimbleness 6+, Armed Combat 8+.

IMPROVEMENT: For an additional pick, you may attain one more combat action, making your action allowance 4. You may only improve this ability once.

Warrior-born

From the moment you first picked up sword and shield, all could see that you had a natural talent for the warrior's art. Your limbs respond almost instinctively to give you the best aim or strike the best blow. You may spend a point of Courage to receive a +2 bonus to all Armed Combat and Ranged Combat tests during a single battle, as defined by the Narrator)\.

REQUISITES: Strength 8+, Nimbleness 9+.

ELITE ORDERS

Most characters are content to remain within their chosen order for their entire adventuring careers. However, some noteworthy and heroic characters—including many player characters—find that their abilities, desires, and needs transcend the limits of a single order. Some of them adopt other basic orders, expanding the general scope of their abilities. But others choose to focus on a particular aspect of their existing order, eventually developing their abilities to such an extent that they qualify for an *elite order.*

Elite orders represent more limited orders with skills and abilities tightly linked to a specific way of fighting or adventuring. None are easy to join. To do so, a character must do three things. First, he must have at least six advancements in one basic order. He may have additional advancements in other basic orders, but must have at least six in a single order. Second, he must satisfy any of the requisites listed for the elite order. For example, he needs Nimbleness 8+ and Ranged Combat 8+ to become an archer. Third, as discussed in the sidebar on page 79, he must allot five advancement picks to take up the calling of the elite order.

Beyond these requirements, no restrictions exist on which characters can join which elite orders, except those imposed by the Narrator. For example, the archer, captain, knight, and ranger orders are best suited for warriors or sometimes barbarians, but they aren't limited to members of those orders. A noble could easily become a knight, for instance, and in some situations perhaps even a rogue could perform a deed so heroic that a lord knights him. It all depends on the story and the desires of the player and Narrator.

When a character joins an elite order, he does not automatically gain one order ability of his choice for free. He must select order abilities with picks. He gains no skills, but he may now pick skills from the order's list of order skills at the order skill rate.

Elite orders do not have favoured attributes and reactions. Instead, the character uses the favoured attributes and reactions of his basic order. If the character is currently advancing two elite orders at once—instead of a basic order and an elite order—he then uses the favoured attributes and reactions of the basic order of which he was most recently an active member. As soon as he joins a basic order again, he uses that order's favoured attributes and reactions instead.

ARCHER

'Suddenly the great bow of Lórien
sang. Shrill went the arrow
from the elven-string.'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

Fighting men possessed of great skill with the bow—or, rarely, some other ranged weapon—archers play an important role in any army of the Third Age. Able to strike and kill the foe from a distance with breathtaking accuracy, the archer gives a force—or a group of adventurers—many new tactical options.

ADVENTURES

Archers bring the same benefits to a group of adventurers as ordinary warriors do, but they add their matchless skill at ranged combat. While any warrior, and indeed many characters of other orders, can use a bow or throw a spear, an archer's skill with such weapons allows him to strike smaller targets farther away than any ordinary fighting man could ever hope to hit.

BACKGROUND

Most archers begin their careers as warriors. However, some nobles favour this order, since it allows them to focus on the elegance of archery instead of crude and dangerous armed combat. Rogues, with their high Nimbleness scores, make skilled archers as well. Hobbits often develop some archer advancements as well, because of their general skill with thrown and shot objects, and the Elves are justly famed for the many archers among them.

GAME INFORMATION

Requisites

To become an archer, you must have Nimbleness 8+ and Ranged Combat 8+.

Order Skills

The archer's order skills are: Armed Combat (Nim), Climb (Str), Games (Nim), Intimidate (Brg), Jump (Str), Observe (Per), Ranged Combat (Nim), Run (Str), Stealth (Nim).

ABILITIES

When you create an archer, you may make one pick from the following special abilities:

Bowyer

The most versatile archers know how to keep themselves supplied with arrows, as well as how to keep their bows in good repair. You receive a +4 bonus to Craft: Bows/Arrows and to Smithcraft when using it to forge arrowheads.

Furthermore, even if you lack the proper tools for shaping wood into bows or arrows, you can fashion crude weapons from unformed wood. Such bows impose a –2 penalty on Ranged Combat tests, and the arrows inflict a –1 penalty. These penalties are cumulative. An arrow without a head does 1d6+1 damage with a sharpened point, or if left completely blunt it can be used to execute Stun attacks at range (see page 232).

Deadly Shot

No matter how difficult it is to hit a target, you always strike with lethal accuracy, hitting vulnerable points. Choose one ranged weapon. You do +2 damage with that weapon.

REQUISITES: Nimbleness 9+, Ranged Combat 10+, Mighty Shot.

IMPROVEMENT: You may pick this ability multiple times, but you must take each additional pick and apply it to a different weapon.

Far Shot

You can shoot more accurately at great distances than most bowmen can. You add +5 yards to each category of range (see page 203) for a single ranged weapon of your choice.

REQUISITE: Mighty Shot.

IMPROVEMENT: You may pick this ability multiple times. Each additional pick either applies the standard bonus to another weapon or increases the bonus for your chosen weapon by +5 yards (for a maximum of +10 yards total with a single weapon).

Mighty Shot

So skilled are you with bow and arrow that conditions which hinder other archers mean little to you. You may cancel out up to –2 worth of penalties to your Ranged Combat test results.

IMPROVEMENT: You may pick this ability multiple times. Each additional pick allows you to cancel out another –1 worth of penalties (maximum of –4).

Swift Shot

You can string an arrow, draw your bow, and fire with blinding speed, allowing you to shoot more often than other bowmen. You gain one extra ranged combat action per round. Your action allowance becomes 3, instead of the normal 2, but you may only use the extra action for ranged combat attacks.

REQUISITES: Nimbleness 10+, Ranged Combat 12+, Mighty Shot, Far Shot.

IMPROVEMENT: For an additional pick, you may attain one more ranged combat action, making your action allowance 4. You may only improve this ability one time.

CAPTAIN

> *'But he looked at the fell faces of the Captains and their deadly eyes, and fear overcame his wrath.'*
> — *The Return of the King*

A leader of men, the captain commands the loyalty of high and low alike, whether in times of peace or days of war. Some captains come to the order through rank and training, others through a natural gift for command. The greatest of them, such as Faramir, possess both.

ADVENTURES

Captains are valued members of any adventuring group. Not only do they have great prowess as warriors, but their leadership abilities help them keep the group together and in good cheer, despite any obstacles encountered. If the group becomes involved in a large battle, such as those at Helm's Deep or the Pelennor Fields during the War of the Ring, the captain's usefulness becomes even more pronounced.

BACKGROUND

Most captains begin their careers as warriors or nobles. Both these orders provide the training they need to command others and conduct war. At times, a mariner or barbarian may join the ranks of the captains as well.

GAME INFORMATION

Requisites

To become a captain, you must have Bearing 8+ and Armed Combat 8+.

Order Skills

The captain's order skills are: Armed Combat (Nim), Debate (Wit), Healing (Wit), Inspire (Brg), Intimidate (Brg), Lore (Wit), Persuade (Brg), Ranged Combat (Nim), Seacraft (Wit), Siegecraft (Wit).

ABILITIES

When you create a captain, you may make one pick from the following special abilities:

Air of Command

A captain leads, in part, through his decisiveness and aura of authority. When he makes a Willpower test, he rolls 3d6, keeping the highest two dice. The standard rule for rolling double 6s applies.

REQUISITES: Inspire 6+, Intimidate 4+.

Fires of Devotion

You inspire such loyalty and devotion in those who follow you that they can withstand most attempts to break or terrify them. When you lead a unit in unit combat (see page 239), that unit has +2 Morale. Additionally, you receive a +2 bonus with Inspire tests to keep the unit together, help the men resist fear, and so forth.

These bonuses only apply so long as you remain alive, active, and in command of the unit. If you are injured so badly that you cannot continue to fight, the unit loses its Morale bonus, and you lose the bonus to Inspire. If you are slain, the unit not only loses the bonus, it suffers an additional –2 penalty to its Morale for the next 1–3 rounds.

REQUISITES: Inspire 8+, Air of Command.

Hero's Strength

So powerful a warrior are you that with you at their head your men can take on foes of greater strength and defeat them. You provide a +2 bonus to the Strength of a unit you lead. This bonus only applies so long as you remain alive, active, and in command of the unit. If you are injured so badly that you cannot continue to fight, the unit loses the bonus. If you are slain, the unit not only loses the bonus, it suffers an additional –2 penalty to its Strength for the next 1–3 rounds.

REQUISITES: Armed Combat 10+, Inspire 6+, Intimidate 6+.

Leadership

Captains must command others, leading each member of a group or unit to do his best to accomplish the group's goals. A truly skilled captain can actually inspire those under his command to perform tasks better than they otherwise would. As a full-round action, he may make an Inspire test (TN 15, +1 per number of characters led). All who are to receive the benefit of his leadership must be in his presence (within 30 feet of him) and able to hear him speak or see him act. If the captain succeeds with his test, all the men under his command double the bonus they confer by participating in combined tests. They grant a +2 bonus, rather than the usual +1. If the test is an extended test, the captain must participate for the entire task, with each successful Inspire test adding to the test result for the round. If anything interrupts the captain's use of Leadership, he loses the benefits of it and must make a new Inspire test to recover them.

REQUISITES: Inspire 8+, Air of Command.

Tactics

You are skilled at the conduct of battles and sieges, able to order your forces for greatest effect. Once per game session, you can re-roll one test with any of the following skills, adding a +2 bonus to the second roll: Armed Combat, Ranged Combat, Siegecraft, and Unarmed Combat. You use the better of the two results.

REQUISITE: Siegecraft 8+.

IMPROVEMENT: You can pick this ability multiple times. Each additional pick garners you an additional re-roll per game session.

KNIGHT

'But the white fury of the Northmen burned the hotter, and more skilled was their knighthood with long spears and bitter.'

— The Return of the King

Knight is a type of fighting man specializing in heavy mounted combat. He wears strong armour, such as a chain hauberk or chain enhanced by plates, and most often wields sword and spear, though he may use other weapons as well, such as axes or bows. An expert at mounted combat, he fights from horseback with both power and grace. Most importantly, he is sworn to the service of a lord or king, bound by powerful oaths to fight on his liege's behalf.

ADVENTURES

Knights become involved with adventures and adventuring groups for many of the same reasons other warriors do: a desire to test their fighting skills, a need to seek glory and honour through hardship and battle, a calling to protect others against the servants of the Shadow. As sworn liegemen, they may also undertake quests at the command of their lord.

BACKGROUND

Almost all knights begin their careers as warriors, though sometimes nobles become knights as well. However, as noted above, at times a lord may reward brave and noble deeds by knighting those who perform them, regardless of station or abilities.

Many Rohirrim belong to this order, as do many warriors of Dol Amroth. Gondor has few knights, since its soldiers prefer not to fight from horseback, but some, such as the guards of the White Tower, nevertheless qualify for it.

GAME INFORMATION

Requisites

To become a knight, you must have Strength 7+, Bearing 6+, Armed Combat 7+, Ride 5+, and Fealty.

Order Skills

The knight's order skills are: Armed Combat (Nim), Healing (Wit), Inspire (Brg), Intimidate (Brg), Lore (Wit), Observe (Per), Ranged Combat (Nim), Ride (Brg), Siegecraft (Wit), Smithcraft (Str).

ABILITIES

When you create a knight, you may make one pick from the following special abilities:

Born To the Saddle

You have a natural gift for riding horses and can coax greater effort from them without causing them harm. For one hour, you can increase a horse's pace by up to 30% without increasing the TN for Stamina tests to resist Weariness. Additionally, when you have to make Stamina tests to resist Weariness from riding, you have a +5 test result bonus.

REQUISITES: Bearing 8+, Ride 9+, Horsemaster

Horse Archer

When attempting to shoot arrows or throw missiles from horseback, most combatants suffer a –4 test result penalty (see 'Ranged Combat Tests Table,' page 230). You, however, do not. You have trained long and hard to shoot and throw accurately while riding.

REQUISITES: Nimbleness 5+, Ranged Combat 6+, Ride 6+

Horsemaster

You have a special rapport with horses and some other beasts of burden. When you spend Courage to improve a Ride test, you receive a +5 bonus instead of the normal +3.

REQUISITES: Bearing 6+, Ride 7+

Mounted Combat

Thanks to the many hours you have spent in the saddle, training at arms and practicing battle manoeuvres, you are actually better at fighting from horseback than on foot. You receive a +2 bonus to all Armed Combat tests you make while mounted, and to all Ride tests you make in combat.

REQUISITES: Nimbleness 6+, Armed Combat 6+, Ride 8+.

Shield-Wall

Most knights use shields when they fight, and you are especially skilled at protecting yourself with one. When you fight side-by-side with another person using a shield (often another knight), each of you gains an additional +2 parry bonus with the shield.

RANGER

'"If you bring a Ranger with you, it is well to pay attention to him[.]"'
— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

Men trained in the arts of tracking, hunting, scouting, and surviving in the wilds, rangers are fearsome foes to servants of the Enemy. Able to stalk and slay Orcs without being seen, move silently through field and forest, read the signs left on even the hardest ground, and wield sword and bow with deadly skill, they guard the Free Peoples from the dark and evil things that lurk in the shadows of Middle-earth.

ADVENTURES

Rangers bring a wide variety of useful skills to any group of adventurers. Their ability to track enemies proves vital during many adventures, and their skill at arms helps to protect both them and their friends from harm.

Because they must travel swiftly and silently, rangers often carry little gear. They favour light armour, such as leather, or even no armour at all, and they take only one or two weapons—at most—when they venture forth into the wild. Rather than carry large stores of food, they support themselves by hunting and gathering.

BACKGROUND

Rangers can come from many different places and peoples. Most begin as warriors, but some barbarians can develop their skills to the point where they are, in essence, rangers. Most rangers are Men, but some Elves certainly have the right wilderness skills to ascend to this elite order.

GAME INFORMATION

Requisites

To become a ranger, you must have Armed Combat 5+, Ranged Combat 5+, Stealth 5+, Survival 7+, and Track 7+.

Order Skills

The ranger's order skills are: Armed Combat (Nim), Climb (Str), Jump (Str), Observe (Per), Ranged Combat (Nim), Ride (Brg), Run (Str), Stealth (Nim), Survival (Per), Track (Wit).

ABILITIES

When you create a ranger, you may make one pick from the following special abilities:

Camouflage

You have learned how to use special clothes, skin dyes, natural elements, and other methods to more effectively conceal yourself in the wilderness. With a successful TN 5 Guise test, you gain a +1 bonus to all Stealth tests made to hide in the wild. Add another +1 for every additional level of success on the Guise test.

IMPROVEMENT: For an additional pick allotted to this ability, you may use it to conceal both othercharacters and objects. The TN in such a case is 10.

Cross-Order Skill

Rangers often learn many unusual skills or strange bodies of lore during their travels. You may choose one non-order skill and treat it like an order skill for the purposes of skill acquisition and advancement.

Hard March

Rangers can learn and use the same Hard March ability as barbarians (see page 81). However, rangers may also use this ability when riding horses.

IMPROVEMENT: For each additional pick allotted to this ability, you may extend its benefits to one additional person who travels with you.

Protector

Part of a ranger's job is to protect, preserve, and defend other folk, often so that they remain unaware of the dangers that all too often threaten them. You take this duty seriously, and your devotion to this cause inspires you when others might falter. Define one reasonably sized group of people whom you have sworn to protect, such as the Hobbits of the Shire, the people of Bree, or the citizens of Minas Tirith. When fighting against enemies threatening them, you receive a +2 bonus to hit with Armed Combat tests, or to parry the enemies' attacks. The Narrator decides what constitutes 'fighting against enemies threatening them' in situations where there is any doubt.

REQUISITES: Armed Combat 8+, any one other ranger special ability, an appropriate Duty, Fealty, or Oath flaw.

IMPROVEMENT: You may pick this ability multiple times. Each additional pick extends your protection to another group of people.

Retreat

You have a secret hideout or base of operations that is well-concealed from the servants of the Enemy. There you can store supplies and weapons, rest without fear of discovery, and plan ambushes of your foes. (*Note:* This ability may not be a good choice for player characters, since it tends to tie them to a particular location. Consult with your Narrator before selecting it.)

Walk Without Trace

Rangers can learn and use the same Walk Without Trace ability as barbarians (see page 82).

IMPROVEMENT: For each additional pick allotted to this ability, you may extend its benefits to one additional person who travels with you.

Wilderness Lore

Your skill with matters of woodcraft is high indeed, at times causing amazement even in others trained in the wilderness arts. When you spend Courage to improve a test with any wilderness-based skill (like Survival, Track, or Weather Sense), you receive a +5 bonus instead of the normal +3.

SPY

'"The enemy has many spies and many ways of hearing."'
— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

Spies are people specially trained in the arts of observation, stealth, and deception. They maintain a careful watch on people and places, reporting anything unusual or noteworthy to their masters—or, perhaps, to anyone with sufficient coin to purchase the information.

ADVENTURES

Among many folk, particularly the Free Peoples, spies have an unwholesome reputation, since they most often work for the Shadow. But not all spies are evil. Many serve wiser masters, such as the lords of Gondor, ranger groups, or Elrond. Their skills of observation and manipulation can help an adventuring group in many situations.

BACKGROUND

Most spies start as rogues, since a roguish life often leads a character to develop abilities that a spy can make good use of. Occasionally, a minstrel or noble, driven by need or the commands of his liege-lord, adopts the methods and mannerisms of the spy to accomplish some vital quest.

GAME INFORMATION

Requisites

To become a spy, you must have Nimbleness 8+, Observe 6+, Persuade 6+, and Stealth 8+.

Order Skills

The spy's order skills are: Armed Combat (Nim), Conceal (Wit), Guise (Wit), Inquire (Brg), Mimicry (Brg), Observe (Per), Persuade (Brg), Ranged Combat (Nim), Search (Per), Stealth (Nim).

ABILITIES

When you create a spy, you may make one pick from the following special abilities:

Cross-Order Skill

Because of his unusual job, a spy often learns many unusual skills or useful bits of information. You may choose one non-order skill and treat it like an order skill for the purposes of skill acquisition and advancement.

Friends in Low Places

Spies often succeed based on how quickly they can uncover valuable information. To this end, many of them maintain friendships with a wide variety of people—from the high to the low—who are willing to pass along the latest news, perhaps in exchange for a favour or a coin or two. Define a reasonable-sized area covered by your informants: the Shire, the Bree region, Minas Tirith, coastal Gondor, or the like. When you make Inquire tests there, you have a +5 test result bonus.

REQUISITE: Bearing 7+

Master of Disguise

You often work in guise, so that the enemies of your master cannot detect that you are in the area and seeking information about them. When you spend Courage on a Guise test, or on a Mimicry test to disguise your voice or imitate the voice of another, you receive a +5 bonus instead of the usual +3.

REQUISITES: Guise 8+, Mimicry 6+

Poisoner

Spies must sometimes become assassins, striking down their enemies swiftly and silently. They often do this with poison. This ability is identical to the barbarian Brew Poison ability (see page 81).

Watchful Companion

You have a pet or animal companion of some kind who assists you with your spying. Most such pets are birds, but some are small animals such as cats, squirrels, or the like. Your companion can understand and does its best to obey simple commands such as 'follow that person and tell me where he goes' or 'keep watch on the Redhorn Gate and alert me if anyone passes through.' The animal cannot speak with the character, but it can make its information known through simple methods of communication: hand-signals, tapping its feet a specified number of times, and so forth. You may have to make a Wits test to understand it in some cases. The Narrator determines how much information the animal can uncover, and how easy it is to understand what it is trying to say.

WIZARD

'With that the hobbit turned and scuttled inside his round green door, and shut it as quickly as he dared, not to seem rude. Wizards after all are wizards.'
— The Hobbit

Advanced and powerful practitioners of the arts of magic, wizards are members of an order with a noble and ancient history. In about the year 1000 of the Third Age, the leaders of this order, the Five Wizards, arrived at the Grey Havens. Others accompanied them, or came later, and they spread throughout Middle-earth, counselling and aiding the Free Peoples to resist the Shadow. At times, they took under their collective wing skilled magicians and loremasters of true heart, teaching them greater lore and wisdom. When proper, they inducted them into the order as well, though this was always done sparingly. (The number of wizards has never been great.) Thus have the Five Wizards propagated themselves and their wisdom, doing their best to ensure that their mission shall never fail.

ADVENTURES

The principle objective laid upon any of the wizards—to oppose the Shadow, and through counsel and aid to assist others to do so—of a certainty leads them to adventure. They often travel extensively, braving the dangers of the road and the servants of the Shadow to reach rulers and people in need. At times, they go deep into the heart of the Enemy's lands to seek lore or spy on his doings. Sometimes they accompany other groups of adventurers on quests, or seek their assistance with quests of their own, for even one who commands such mighty powers of magic is not proof against the scimitars of Orcs, the fangs of beasts, or the perils of the wild.

BACKGROUND

All wizards have at least some skill as magicians or loremasters, since members of the order do not teach their arts to any who cannot already wield magic.

See Chapter Seven for more information on wizards.

GAME INFORMATION

Requisites

To become a wizard, you must have Bearing 8+, Wits 8+, at least four Lores at 6+, and the ability to cast spells.

Furthermore, when they join with the wizards, characters must subscribe to a code of conduct. They must swear to oppose Sauron and all of his servants and to help others to do the same. However, they may only do so indirectly, through counsel and aid. They may not take command of realms or forces, nor lead attacks against the Enemy. Only after the Enemy has attacked may they take the field and use their awesome powers to strike down his servants. Of course, some wizards fall from this lofty path—even Saruman, the chief of the order, did so—but most hold to it gladly, recognizing its wisdom. (In game terms, characters may represent these restrictions with flaws such as Code of Honour, Duty, or Oath, but they are not required to.)

Order Skills

The wizard's order skills are: Debate (Wit), Healing (Wit), Insight (Per), Inspire (Brg), Intimidate (Brg), Language (Wit), Lore (Wit), Observe (Per), Persuade (Brg), Search (Per), Survival (Per).

ABILITIES

When you create a wizard, you may make one pick from the following special abilities:

Wizard Spellcasting

This ability—the same as the Spellcasting ability of the magician—*must* be taken first, before any other ability. It reflects the wizard's power to cast spells and manipulate the magic of Middle-earth. Each time a wizard picks this ability, he gets five

CHARACTER CREATION EXAMPLE: MENELCAR AND GRÓR

Continued from page 73:

Christian and John now have to select orders for their characters. Both decide that they want to play warriors, but very different types of warriors.

Since Menelcar was raised on the Gondorian coast, Christian decides that he serves the Prince of Dol Amroth. Eventually Christian wants him to become a knight. Since the warriors of Dol Amroth often fight from horseback, Christian selects the 'Horseman' warrior package for Menelcar. He notes the appropriate skills: Armed Combat +3, Healing +1, Inspire +2, Intimidate +2, Observe +2, Ranged Combat +1, Ride +3, Siegecraft +1. Then he goes back and adds five ranks to them, resulting in the following: Armed Combat +4 (+5 because of his racial pick), Healing +1, Inspire +2, Intimidate +3, Observe +2, Ranged Combat +3, Ride +3, Siegecraft +2. For his edge, he decides that Bold is appropriate, since Menelcar is forthright and brave. Lastly, he uses his five free picks to increase his Bearing to 9 (two picks), his Armed Combat to +6 (one pick), and to acquire the edges Favour of Fortune and Strong-willed.

John, on the other hand, decides that he wants to play a typical Dwarf-warrior, so he chooses the 'Basic Warrior' package. That gives him these skills: Armed Combat +3, Healing +1, Inspire +1, Intimidate +1, Observe +2, Ranged Combat +3, Ride +2, Siegecraft +2. Since Dwarves don't learn how to ride, he asks the Narrator's permission to replace the 'Ride +2' with two other order skills: Climb +1 and Track +1. Recognizing the wisdom of this request, the Narrator permits it. John then adds five ranks to his package skills, resulting in the following list: Armed Combat +5 (+6 because of his racial pick), Climb +1, Healing +2, Inspire +1, Intimidate +3, Observe +2, Ranged Combat +3, Siegecraft +2, Track +1. For his edge, he chooses Warrior's Heart. For his five free picks, he boosts his Nimbleness to 9 (two picks) and his Wits to 7 (three picks).

For the complete character sheets of Menelcar and Grór, see their archetypes on pages 38 and 39.

spell picks. He uses these spell picks to acquire new spells and improve the ones he already knows. See 'Spells,' page 167, for details.

IMPROVEMENT: A wizard may pick this ability more than once, each time acquiring five more spell picks.

Cross-Order Skill

Because of the breadth of their learning and experiences, wizards often possess unusual skills or useful bodies of lore. You may choose one non-order skill and treat it like an order skill for the purposes of skill acquisition and advancement.

REQUISITE: Wizard Spellcasting.

Final Strike

It is dangerous to trap a wizard, for even in ultimate defeat he can strike his enemies down. If he chooses, he can unleash all of his magical power in a single, terrible blast, slaying dozens of foes at once at the cost of his own life. He dies, but as he goes he does a number of points of damage equal to three for every spell he can cast. Apply the damage to anyone in an area with a radius equal to the number of advancements he has (in all orders) times two yards, centred upon the wizard. For example, a wizard with 25 advancements who knows 33 spells could perform a final strike that would cause 99 points of damage to everyone within a 50-yard radius.

At the Narrator's option, a final strike may not kill the wizard, but simply leave him injured, weary, and weak, and unable to cast spells for a long time—perhaps forever.

REQUISITE: Wizard Spellcasting.

Imposing

Wizards possess great wisdom, majesty, and power, and this shows through in their dealings with others. When they spend a point of Courage on Inspire and Intimidate tests, they gain a +5 bonus, rather than the usual +3.

REQUISITES: Wizard Spellcasting, Willpower +4 or greater.

Longevity

Among the many magical secrets known to wizards is the lore of preserving their vigour, effectively extending the years allotted to them. By picking this ability, the wizard gains a lifespan double that of the figure listed in the 'Aged' category in the table on page 73. Double the amount of years spent in each aging category, as well.

REQUISITES: Wizard Spellcasting, any one other wizard ability.

IMPROVEMENT: Each pick of this ability doubles the length of the wizard's lifespan and aging categories again.

Mastery of Magic

Even more so than magicians, wizards possess great lore and a deep understanding of the magic of Middle-earth. Whenever wizards spend a point of Courage on a magic-related test—including tests to strike foes with magic, or to resist the wearying effects of magic—they gain a +5 bonus, rather than the usual +3.

REQUISITE: Wizard Spellcasting.

Sense Power

You have a wizard's innate sense for magical power. You may use the *Sense Power* spell as if you had made it a magical ability (page 186).

REQUISITES: Wizard Spellcasting, Perception 8+.

Staff

You possess a wizard's staff. It is a powerful object that aids spellcasting. When you have your staff, you receive a +2 bonus to Stamina tests to resist Weariness from spellcasting. Your staff is a personal talisman. If taken from you, it does not provide this bonus for others.

REQUISITE: Wizard Spellcasting

Wizard Spellcasting Method

This ability functions identically to the magician ability Spellcasting Method.

REQUISITE: Wizard Spellcasting

IMPROVEMENT: You may pick this ability a second time, thus learning all three ways of casting spells.

Wizard Spell Specialty

This ability functions identically to the magician ability Spell Specialty.

REQUISITE: Wizard Spellcasting

IMPROVEMENT: You may pick this ability multiple times, thus developing many different specialties.

Wizardly Power

Because they command great magical lore, wizards can, when the need arises, cast spells of much greater power than magicians. Once per game session, a wizard may spend one Courage to activate this power, which doubles the range, area, damage, and other quantified effects of a spell he casts. He also suffers a –10 penalty for the Stamina test to resist Weariness for the spell.

REQUISITES: Wizard Spellcasting, any two other wizard abilities

FREE PICKS

After you choose your character's order and order skills and abilities, you're almost done with character creation. At this stage, you receive *five* free picks for anything you wish. You can use each pick to add one to any attribute value, add one rank to any skill, or acquire one edge. However, you cannot use free picks to learn more order abilities. In any case, the standard rule that you cannot start the game with any skill at higher than rank 6 still applies.

Chapter Five

RINGING ANVILS AND RHYMES OF LORE

> *' "We have done well...But in metal-work we cannot rival our fathers, many of whose secrets are lost." '*
> *— Glóin, The Fellowship of the Ring*

Every character knows how to do certain things. Warriors learn how to wield weapons, ride horses, and conduct battles. Minstrels can sing, play instruments, and entertain people. Craftsmen know how to bake bread, tend gardens, sew clothes, or do many other things. And loremasters and magicians study many obscure bodies of lore.

The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game refers to these learned abilities as skills. A skill represents something a character knows or knows how to do, through experience or study.

ACQUIRING SKILLS

First, characters learn certain skills while growing up, as they discover the world around them. These skills depend on the character's race. Each race described in Chapter Three has a list of skills, from which you make six picks while creating a character. You should make your picks based on where and how the character was raised. A Rider of Rohan learns different things than one of the Men of the White Mountains, for instance.

ORDER SKILLS

Second, characters learn more skills as a result of the order they choose. Each order in Chapter Four has a list of order skills proper for it. For example, warriors and rogues both have Armed Combat listed as an order skill, since they often wield weapons as part of their work, but loremasters do not, for they typically ignore the study of the arts of war.

Skills

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Third, characters improve the skills they know—and acquire others—as a result of their experiences and encounters during adventures. As they earn experience points and go through advancements, characters have the opportunity to increase their ranks in skills or learn new ones.

SKILL RANKS AND SPECIALTIES

All skills have ranks indicating how accomplished and learned a character is at them. Ranks range from 0 (untrained) to 12 and sometimes higher. The greater your character's rank in a skill, the better he is with it.

Most skills represent broad areas of knowledge and experience. For example, Armed Combat: Blades reflects a character's ability with all sorts of bladed melee weapons, ranging from longswords to greatswords to rapiers. But within these broader fields of learning, a person often focuses on specific abilities or bodies of lore that most appeal to him. A warrior may have training with all types of blade (Armed Combat: Blades), but he favours the longsword over all others and so learns to use it better than the broad or greatsword. The CODA SYSTEM simulates this by requiring you to choose a *specialty* for most of your character's skills.

Your choice of specialties reflects your character's particular training or preferences, the topics he's most familiar with, and so forth. For example, if he knows Sea-craft, how does he use it? Is he better at building ships or sailing them? Is he experienced with true ships or just small boats? Depending on how you answer those questions, you would choose Boating, Sailing, or Shipwright as specialties for your character. A skill represents broad expertise. A specialty tells you what your character's best at within that field.

Of course, having a specialty does *not* mean your character knows nothing about the other aspects of the skill. It just means he's not quite as proficient with them. A character with Sea-craft (Shipwright) can still sail the ships he builds. He's just not as good at that as he is at building them. When making a test with your specialty—Shipwright instead of Sailing, for instance—you receive a +2 bonus. For example, a character who uses his Stonecraft (Building) +8 to construct a wall adds (8+2=) 10 to the dice roll when making that test. But if he tries to mine iron ore, he only adds 8 (since Mining is a different specialty of Stonecraft). (See Chapter Nine for more information on tests and Target Numbers.)

Many skill descriptions include a list of suggested specialties, the ones most commonly associated with the skill. Of course, these aren't necessarily the *only* specialties each skill could have. You can create others that seem appropriate, though you must obtain your Narrator's approval for them. Similarly, you could, with your Narrator's approval, create entirely new skills to cover areas of expertise in which you want your character to excel.

When noting your character's skills on your character sheet, write them this way:

Skill (Specialty) +rank.

Thus, your character might know Debate (Bargain) +4. If you learn an additional specialty for a given skill, write it as Debate (Bargain, Parley) +4.

Not all skills have specialties. Some, such as Climb, Run, or Search, don't require such division. Characters can learn all aspects of the skill equally well. If the skill has no specialty, write it this way:

Skill +rank.

For example, Climb +5 or Run +9.

SKILL GROUPS

Other 'skills' aren't actually single skills at all. They're groups of related skills, each of which is still independent of each other. Having ranks in one skill in the group doesn't offer you any benefits when using another skill the group, however. The Language skill, for instance, is a group of skills, one each for each different language. Just because you are fluent in Westron doesn't mean that you know a thing about the Black Tongue. When you note down such a skill, you write it like this:

Skill Group: Skill (Specialty, if any) +rank

For instance, Language: Westron +4.

A character can possess several skills that fall under a skill group, each with its own number of ranks and treated as a separate skill. For instance, a character could have Language: Westron +4, Language: Sindarin +2.

While each skill group includes a list of related skills, these are by no means exhaustive. You should feel free to create additional skills within a group as needed. Of course, before you can use such skills in a chronicle, you need to get your Narrator's approval.

USING SKILLS

As explained in more detail in Chapter Nine, characters use their skills to determine if they accomplish tasks. They do this by making *tests.* To make a test, roll 2d6, then add the character's rank in the skill (at +2 if he has the proper specialty) and the modifier from the attribute associated with the skill, plus any other modifiers (bonuses or penalties) based on circumstances and conditions. If the total, the *test result,* equals or exceeds the *Target Number* (TN) the Narrator set for the task, the character succeeds. The more by which he exceeds the TN, the greater his degree of success. Each skill description below provides example tasks for each TN level as a guide for players and Narrators.

Some skills—those noted with the word 'Trained' in the Master Skill List—can only be used by a character who has undergone proper study and training. In other words, a character has to have at least one level in a 'Trained' skill to use it. Other Skills, noted with 'Untrained,' can be used by anyone, even if they don't have any levels with that skill. See page 223 for more information.

TABLE 5.1: TEST CATEGORIES

ACADEMIC

Appraise, Language, Lore.

PHYSICAL

Acrobatics, Armed Combat, Climb, Conceal, Craft, Games, Healing, Jump, Legerdemain, Mimicry, Observe, Ranged Combat, Ride, Run, Sea-craft, Search, Siegecraft, Smithcraft, Stonecraft, Stealth, Survival, Swim, Teamster, Track, Weather-sense.

SOCIAL

Debate, Inquire, Insight, Inspire, Intimidate, Perform, Persuade.

TEST CATEGORIES

The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game groups tests into three categories—academic, physical, and social—to make it easier to determine which modifiers affect them. See the accompanying table to determine which skills fall into each category. All physical tests, for example, can be affected by lighting, terrain, cover, or similar factors. The descriptions of physical tests in Chapter Nine group these modifiers in one place to make them easy to locate and use.

Some skills have aspects that fall into more than one category, so you may find your Narrator applying different modifiers at different times. For example, creating a wall with Stonecraft is a physical task, subject to physical category modifiers. On the other hand, evaluating the quality and strength of existing stonework requires thought and careful consideration, so academic modifiers would apply in that case.

TEST ATTRIBUTES

Every skill description lists a governing attribute. This is the attribute that most commonly applies to tests made with that skill. However, depending on the nature of a given test, the Narrator may decide another attribute is more appropriate.

For example, Stonecraft tests normally involve Strength, which reflects the way a mason has to use his brawn to quarry stone, put stones in place, and so forth. But in some cases, such as evaluating the quality of stonework, using Wits or Perception instead of Strength makes more sense. For extremely delicate stonecarving work, Nimbleness might apply. The Narrator determines when to use a different attribute than the one listed.

The Narrator can call for tests based on Wits whenever it's necessary to determine the extent of a character's knowledge of a particular subject, or his ability to evaluate or analyze objects and situations relating to the skill. This usually applies to any 'academic' category use of physical skills. For example, if a character wants to remember the name of the Hobbit who won the Michel Delving ninepins tournament five years ago, Games + Wits works better than Games + Nimbleness. Characters can usually make academic tests with physical skills to judge the difficulty of a task. If they succeed, the Narrator informs them of the difficulty category (but not the exact TN). See page 217 for more about difficulty categories.

SKILL AFFINITY

Sometimes characters can better make use of a skill if they know other, related, skills. The Coda System refers to this as a skill's affinity.

In a situation where two or more skills seem applicable or related to a given task, the Narrator must decide which one is the primary skill—and therefore used to make the test—and which ones simply provide an affinity bonus. Each skill the Narrator determines has an applicable affinity provides a +1 test result bonus. A character *never* suffers a penalty for not having an affinity skill.

EXAMPLE: *Galadar (a Dúnadan Ranger) has Stealth (Sneak) +8 and Survival (Forests) +10. He wants to move silently through a wooded area to sneak up on and ambush some Orcs. The Narrator decides that Stealth is the most applicable skill, but that Survival (Forests) provides a +1 affinity bonus. When Galadar makes his Stealth test, he gets +1 because of his woodcraftiness, for a total skill modifier of (8+1=) 9.*

EXAMPLE: *Dori (a Dwarven Craftsman) wants to determine the value of several fine swords he found in a long-lost hoard. He has the skills Appraise (Weapons) +6 and Smithcraft (Weaponsmith) +6. The Narrator decides that Appraise is the primary skill, but allows an affinity bonus based on Dori's experience creating swords at his own forge. When Dori makes his Appraise test, he receives a +1 affinity bonus, for a total skill modifier of (6+1=) 7.*

DEGREES OF SUCCESS

As explained on page 220, the more a character's test result exceeds the TN of the test, the greater the degree of success. With Armed Combat and Ranged Combat Skills, a superior or extraordinary success often means the character inflicts more damage or achieves some other notable effect in battle (see page 231). With non-combat skills, a complete success usually reduces the time needed to perform a task by one-fourth (25%). A superior success cuts the time in half. An extraordinary success trims the time by three-fourths (75%). The Narrator may apply other appropriate effects from extra successes if she prefers.

Table 5.2: Master Skill List

Skill	Attribute	Test Category	Untrained?	Specialties/Skills
Acrobatics	Nimbleness	Physical	Y	Balance, Swing, Tumble
Appraise	Wits	Academic	N	Gems, Gold, Silver, Weapons, Armour
Armed Combat	Nimbleness	Physical	Y	Skill Group Specific Melee Weapon Category (Swords, Clubs, and so on)
Climb	Strength	Physical	Y	None
Conceal	Wits	Physical	Y	Hide Treasure, Hide Weapon
Craft	Nimbleness	Physical	N	Skill Group *Cooking, Sculpture, Pottery, Painting, and so on*
Debate	Wits	Social	Y	Bargain, Negotiate, Parley
Games	Nimbleness	Physical	Y	Skill Group Specific Game (Chess, Riddles, Wrestling, and so on)
Guise	Wits	Academic	N	None
Healing	Wits	Physical	N	Herbal Remedies, Treat Illness, Treat Wounds
Inquire	Bearing	Social	Y	Converse, Interrogate
Insight	Perception	Social	Y	None
Inspire	Bearing	Social	Y	None
Intimidate	Bearing	Social	Y	Fear, Majesty, Power, Torture
Jump	Strength	Physical	Y	None
Language	Wits	Academic	N	Skill Group Specific Language (Sindarin, Westron, and so on)
Legerdemain	Nimbleness	Physical	N	Pick Pocket, Prestidigitation, Open Lock
Lore	Wits	Academic	N	Skill Group Region, People, Magic, and so on.
Mimicry	Bearing	Physical	N	Beasts, Voices
Observe	Perception	Physical	Y	Hear, Sense Power, Smell, Spot, Taste, Touch
Perform	Bearing	Social	Y	Skill Group Compose Verse, Play Specific Instrument, Sing, Tell Stories, and so on
Persuade	Bearing	Social	Y	Charm, Fast Talk, Oratory
Ranged Combat	Nimbleness	Physical	Y	Skill group Specific Ranged Weapon Category (Bows, Thrown Objects, and so on)
Ride	Bearing	Physical	Y	Specific Animal
Run	Strength	Physical	Y	None
Sea-craft	Wits	Physical	N	Boating, Sailing, Shipwright
Search	Perception	Physical	Y	None
Siegecraft	Wits	Physical	N	Defence, Specific Siege Engine, Unit Leadership
Smithcraft	Strength	Physical	N	Armoursmith, Goldsmith, Jewelsmith (Elves only), Weaponsmith
Stealth	Nimbleness	Physical	Y	Hide, Shadow, Sneak, Surveil
Stonecraft	Strength	Physical	N	Building, Fortification, Mining
Survival	Perception	Physical	Y	Skill Group Specific Environment (Forests, Mountains, and so on)
Swim	Strength	Physical	Y	None
Teamster	Strength	Physical	Y	Carts, Chariots, Wains
Track	Wits	Physical	N	Specific Animal Type, Specific Race, Scent
Unarmed Combat	Nimbleness	Physical	Y	Skill Group Brawling, Wrestling
Weather-sense	Perception	Physical	N	None

SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

The remainder of this chapter provides descriptions of the skills your character can learn. Each description follows the same format:

SKILL NAME (ATTRIBUTE)

Test Category; Trained or Untrained

ATTRIBUTE: The attribute that normally applies to tests with the skill.

TEST CATEGORY: The test category that usually applies to tests made with the skill.

TRAINED OR UNTRAINED: 'Trained' means that a character must have at least one rank in the skill to use it. 'Untrained' indicates that any character can attempt to use this skill, even if he has no ranks in it.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: Two or more specialties for the skill, if it has specialties.

TEST: Common ways in which characters use the skill, including circumstances or factors that can affect the difficulty of tests made with the skill, and examples of use in each difficulty category (Routine, Standard, Challenging, Difficult, Virtually Impossible).

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: In addition to the common test category modifiers discussed in Chapter Nine, some skills are affected by modifiers specific to them. This section lists some of them, if there are any, though the Narrator may create others based on circumstance.

AFFINITY: Any skills that frequently provide affinity bonuses to this skill, and the situations in which they may apply.

ACTION TIME: The base time, expressed either in terms of numbers of actions or units of time (minutes or hours), needed to perform tasks with the skill. The listed times are guidelines only. Based on the circumstances, the Narrator may alter the time needed to accomplish a task.

EXTENDED TEST: With some skills, a failure during an extended test (see page 224) may prevent the character from making further tests to finish the task. A 'N/A' indicates that characters normally don't use the skill in extended tests. A 'Yes' indicates that even if the character fails one test during the extended test, he can keep making further tests, though he may suffer penalties for his failure (see pages 224-225). A 'No' indicates that if he fails one part of the extended test, he fails altogether and cannot make further tests for this attempt.

ACROBATICS (NIMBLENESS)

Physical; Untrained

> *' "I can walk this path," said Legolas; "but the others have not this skill." '*
>
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

Lithe and agile, you have little trouble balancing on narrow mountain ledges, swinging across chasms, and performing similar feats.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: Balance, Swing, Tumble.

TEST: A successful test allows you to complete athletic tasks such as balancing, swinging, tumbling, and squeezing through narrow openings safely. You make it across the chasm or keep from falling off the ledge. The Narrator determines the TN based on how difficult or dangerous the task is.

Simple (TN 5): Balancing on a wide ledge, swinging up to 5 feet.
Routine (TN 10): Balancing on a broad ledge, swinging 6–10 feet.
Challenging (TN 15): Balancing on a narrow ledge, swinging 11–20 feet.
Difficult (TN 20): Balancing on a very narrow ledge, swinging 21–40 feet.
Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Balancing on a rope, swinging 41+ feet.

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: If the character tries to balance on sloped, slippery, or rough surfaces, apply terrain modifiers from Chapter Nine. Using a slippery rope to swing entails a –2 (or greater) test result penalty.

AFFINITY: Climb, Jump, and other physical skills provide affinity bonuses in appropriate circumstances.

ACTION TIME: 1 action.

EXTENDED TEST: No.

APPRAISE (WITS)

Academic; Trained

' "Bilbo had a corslet of mithril-rings that Thorin gave him. . . . I never told him, but its worth was greater than the value of the whole Shire and everything in it." '
— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

You have a fine eye for the value of objects, be they worked items of great worth, or raw gold and gems fit for crafting into heirlooms of beauty.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: Gems, Gold, Silver, Weapons, Armour.

TEST: Appraise has two uses: valuing objects, which includes evaluating their quality in general, and determining if an object is fake.

When evaluating an item, a marginal success indicates you correctly judged its quality and can value it within 10% of its actual value. A complete success tells you the value within 5%. A superior success gives you the correct value. An extraordinary success also tells you where it came from and who made it, if such facts are known—and if not, you can hazard a rough guess, such as 'the Dwarves of the Blue Mountains.' Failure, complete failure, and disastrous failure mean you misestimate the value at between 10%–20%, 30%–50%, or 60%–100% of actual worth, respectively—either over or under.

Simple (TN 5): Evaluating trivial, everyday objects (ordinary market purchases).

Routine (TN 10): Evaluating common objects (gold nuggets, low-value gems, ordinary weapons and armour).

Challenging (TN 15): Evaluating uncommon objects (valuable gems, quality Dwarven goldsmithing).

Difficult (TN 20): Evaluating rare objects (a weapon or armour made by Telchar of Nogrod).

Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Evaluating unique objects (the fragments of Aiglos).

AFFINITY: Craft, Smithcraft, and Stonecraft skills provide affinity bonuses for objects crafted with them. For example, Smithcraft (Goldsmith) grants affinity bonuses for valuing objects made of gold.

ACTION TIME: 1 minute.

EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

ARMED COMBAT (NIMBLENESS)

Physical; Untrained

' ". . . I looked on the hillmen and they seemed over large for me, so I sat beside a stone to see your sword-play." '
— Gimli, The Two Towers

Skilled at the use of melee weapons, you are a warrior to be feared. Use the skills within this group to fight with close-combat weapons. Some weapons are grouped together under a single skill, shown on the list below. More exotic weapons, such as the whip, are treated as individual skills.

ARMED COMBAT SKILLS

AXES: You are handy with axes and other hacking weapons of all sorts You can further specialize by weapon type, including battle axe, great axe , mattock, and so on.

BLADES: You are skilled in the use of blades and other slashing and stabbing weapons of all sorts. You can further specialize by weapon type, including longsword, short sword, dagger, and so on.

CLUBS: You are skilled in the use of clubs and other bashing weapons of all sorts. You can further specialize by weapon type, including club, hammer, mace, shield, staff, and so on.

NATURAL WEAPONS: This skill is normally only taken by creatures and fell beasts who are skilled in the use of their own natural weapons. They can further specialize by weapon type, including fangs, talons, tail and so on.

POLEARMS: You are skilled in the use of long, shafted weapons with sharp ends. You can further specialize by weapon type, including pikestaff, spear, and so on.

TEST: Make a test with Armed Combat to hit a target in hand-to-hand combat. The base TN is the target's Defence. See Chapter Nine for details on dodging, manoeuvres, modifiers, and damage. The greater your degree of success, the worse the wound you inflict on your foe.

Most Armed Combat tests depend on Nimbleness, for you must be deft and accurate to hit an enemy. But with large, heavy weapons such as axes or clubs, the Narrator may allow you to use Strength instead.

SPECIAL: At skill ranks 6, 9, and 12, you can select *one* of the combat manoeuvres listed on pages 227-230, and receive a +1 bonus when you use it with any weapon with which you have a specialty. You can select the same manoeuvre and weapon repeatedly to get a greater bonus.

ACTION TIME: 1 action.
EXTENDED TEST: N/A.

CLIMB (STRENGTH)

Physical; Untrained

'"What if you comes to a place where there's nowhere to put your feet or your hands?"
"Climb back, I suppose," said Frodo.'
— The Two Towers

You know how to climb trees, scale sheer cliffs, and clamber up ropes.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: None.

TEST: The difficulty for a Climb test depends on the smoothness and steepness of the surface you want to climb. If you succeed, you move up, down, or across a surface at a steady pace, typically 1 yard per round in combat conditions. A superior success increases your movement rate by 50%. An extraordinary success doubles it, though the Narrator may impose reasonable limits on how far you can climb in a given period of time, regardless of how high you roll. A failure on a Climb test usually means you make no progress this round. A complete failure means that you cannot proceed further at all. A disastrous failure results in a fall.

Climbing typically requires two actions. See Chapter Nine for details.

Simple (TN 5): Climb a lightly sloped surface or one with many handholds. Climb 1 yard while not in combat.

Routine (TN 10): Climb an average sloped surface or one with a moderate number of handholds (most trees). Climb 1 yard in combat.
Challenging (TN 15): Climb a steep surface or one with few handholds—a typical cliffside. Climb 2 yards in combat.
Difficult (TN 20): Climb a very steep slope or a surface with almost no handholds. Climb 3–4 yards in combat.
Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Climb a perfectly smooth wall. Climb 5–8 yards in combat.

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: Using a rope and climbing gear usually grants you a test result bonus of 3 or more.

AFFINITY: Acrobatics (Balance) may provide an affinity bonus for climbing some surfaces, particularly when moving across them.

ACTION TIME: 2 actions.
EXTENDED TEST: No.

CONCEAL (WITS)

Physical; Untrained

'They... carried away the pots of gold, and buried them very secretly not far from the track by the river[.]'
— The Hobbit

You know how to hide objects, such as treasure or weapons, so that others cannot find them.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: Hide Treasure, Hide Weapon.

TEST: Most Conceal tests are opposed tests against the Observe (Spot) skill of the person trying to find the hidden object. If you fail your test, anyone who searches for the object finds it without needing to make a test of their own. The difficulty of the test depends on the size of the object you wish to hide, and the available hiding places.

Simple (TN 5): Concealing a knife beneath your cloak.
Routine (TN 10): Concealing a sword beneath your cloak.
Challenging (TN 15): Concealing a staff beneath your cloak.
Difficult (TN 20): Concealing a sword beneath your tunic.
Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Concealing a sword up your sleeve.

AFFINITY: Stealth provides an affinity bonus for Conceal.

ACTION TIME: 1 minute or more.
EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

CRAFT (NIMBLENESS)

Physical; Trained

'"Why, it is better than the honey-cakes of the Beornings, and that is great praise; for the Beornings are the best bakers that I know of[.]"'
— Gimli, The Fellowship of the Ring

You know how to create a particular type of craftwork, such as pottery or clothes. Each Craft in this skill group is a separate skill. Examples include Baking, Calligraphy, Cooking, Toymaking, and Woodcarving. See also Sea-craft, Smithcraft and Stonecraft for other Craft-like skills that are just different enough to warrant an entry of their own.

TEST: Craft is, in essence, a group of skills, since each type of craftwork is a separate skill, not a specialty. A character with Craft: Baking knows nothing about Craft: Sewing, for example.

Most uses of Craft are extended tests, since few tasks of craftwork can be performed with both speed and skill. The difficulty depends on the complexity and quality of the desired end product.

Simple (TN 5): Cook a small, simple meal; sew on a button.

Routine (TN 10): Cook a large, simple meal; repair ripped or torn clothing.

Challenging (TN 15): Cook a small, complex meal; embroider a fine design on a tunic.

Difficult (TN 20): Cook a large, complex meal; sew a beautiful, extremely well-made gown for an elf-maiden.

Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Cook a large, very complex meal; sew a beautiful, extremely well-made gown for an Elf-maiden in just a few hours.

AFFINITY: Some Crafts provide affinity bonuses for others. Craft: Sewing would aid Craft: Embroidery, for example. Other Craft skills may also have affinity, as may Appraise.

ACTION TIME: Varies. Most Craft tests require hours.

EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

DEBATE (WITS)

Social; Untrained

'For a long time the dwarves stood in the dark before the door and debated, until at last Thorin spoke[.]'
— The Hobbit

You are skilled with words and arguments, and you know well how to bargain for what you need, or how to parley with another to obtain some advantage in war or rulership.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: Bargain, Negotiate, Parley.

TEST: Debate represents your ability to convince others with reasoned arguments rather than force of personality or will, which requires Persuade instead. You use it in an opposed test against the target's Wisdom (such as when one captain tries to persuade another to agree with his plan of attack) or against another character's Debate (say, when two courtiers try to sway a king to their respective viewpoints).

The effects of a successful Debate test last indefinitely: as long as the Narrator believes they should, or until some other person or event changes the target's mind. But Debate is not domination. It cannot force the target to do what the speaker suggests, and the target always remains free to reject absurd proposals, regardless of the test result.

AFFINITY: Persuade provides an affinity bonus to Debate. So does knowledge of a skill related to the subject being debated, such as Appraise when bargaining for the price of goods, or Siegecraft when discussing the best way to assault a fortress. Ability to debate in the target's native Language may also provide a bonus, if appropriate.

ACTION TIME: Full round.

EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

GAMES (NIMBLENESS)

Physical; Untrained

'He knew, of course, that the riddle-game was sacred and of immense antiquity, and even wicked creatures were afraid to cheat when they played at it.'
— The Hobbit

You are skilled at games, ever ready to turn your hand to a throw of the darts, or your mind to a clever riddle.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: Specific Game (Chess, Riddles, Wrestling)

TEST: Most Games tests are opposed tests against an opponent. The winner is the person with the highest test result. For games of accuracy, the Narrator may prefer to set a base TN to hit the target. This should be based on the rules for ranged combat (see Chapter Nine), with the winner again the person with the highest successful test result.

Most games in Middle-earth involve accuracy and dexterity and so are governed by Nimbleness. Others, such as the riddle-game or draughts, are games of wisdom and clever play and use Wits instead.

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: If you're new at a mental game and don't yet know the rules and tactics well, you suffer a –2 test result penalty. Every time you play a game, make a TN 10 Wits test. If you pass, you have become familiar enough with the game that this penalty disappears. The Narrator can change the difficulty of the Wits test to reflect the complexity of the game.

AFFINITY: Intimidate or Inspire may influence the target and provide an affinity bonus in appropriate circumstances.

ACTION TIME: Varies with the game being played, although it is often 1 minute.

EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

GUISE (WITS)

Academic; Trained

'For he went in many guises, and won renown under many names.'
— The Return of the King

With clever changes of clothing, look, and manner, you can alter your appearance, preventing your enemies from spying on your doings.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: None.

TEST: Most Guise tests are opposed tests pitting your skill against the Wisdom—or sometimes Observe (Spot) or Search—of anyone who looks closely at you and tries to discern that you are not who you seem. If you adopt a false identity for a long time, the Narrator may have you make a single test for that period, then use the test result as the TN for tests to see through the disguise.

Ordinarily, characters only use Guise to disguise themselves as members of their own race. After all, no guise can help a Man pass as a Dwarf, or a Hobbit an Elf! If disguising one's self as a member of another race is even possible, at the very least it gives onlookers a +5 (or greater) bonus to their opposed test result.

AFFINITY: Successful use of Mimicry (to disguise the voice or to imitate the voice of another) provides an affinity bonus, as does Lore that covers the person (or race other than your own) whose guise you have assumed. Persuade could also help to convince someone that you are who you appear to be.

ACTION TIME: Altering one's appearance usually requires several minutes, if not an hour or more. Trying to trick another person into believing the character is someone else requires at least a full round, if not longer.

EXTENDED TEST: No.

HEALING (WITS)

Physical; Trained

' "The hands of the King are hands of healing, dear friends," he said. "But you went to the very brink of death ere he recalled you. . ." '
— Gandalf, The Return of the King

You are skilled in leechcraft, able to use lore, herb, and methods stranger still to heal the sick and wounded, alleviate their suffering, and help them return to full health. A healer may use many means, from poultices and compresses to healing herbs, to the stinging salve of the Orcs, to sing-song healing chants or other uses of power evoking the subtle magic of Middle-earth.

Sample Specialties: Herbal Remedies, Treat Illness, Treat Wounds.

Test: The difficulty of a Healing test depends on the extent of the wound suffered or the severity of the illness treated. See page 247 for full details on the effects of healing.

Simple (TN 5): Healing minor cuts, bruises, and scrapes (lost points of Health insufficient to reduce a character to Dazed); treating a minor sickness.

Routine (TN 10): Healing a Dazed person; treating an average sickness.

Challenging (TN 15): Healing an Injured person; treating a serious illness.

Difficult (TN 20): Healing a Wounded person; treating a severe illness.

Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Healing an Incapacitated person; treating the Black Breath.

At the Narrator's option, using Healing to counteract particularly virulent or deadly maladies, such as the Black Breath, may cause the character to risk the effects of Weariness (see page 249).

Most uses of Healing require at least one minute. Treating a serious wound or malady may take much longer.

Additional Modifiers: Healing someone who is Near Death requires a TN 30 test. Access to a large, fresh stock of herbal remedies, clean clothes, salves, and other tools of leechcraft provides standard equipment bonuses, whereas performing healing in the field with few supplies may result in penalties.

Affinity: Lore: Herbs provides an affinity bonus for many types of Healing. So does Lore in the race the subject of your leechcraft belongs to.

Action Time: Treating most wounds requires 1 minute per difficulty category: one minute for a Simple task, two minutes for a Routine task, and so on.

Extended Test: Yes.

ATHELAS

Known to most folk as kingsfoil, and to the learned as *asëa aranion*, the herb *athelas* is rare, growing in the North only where the Dúnedain once lived and camped, and in the South in a few forests. But it is worth seeking, for it has great properties of healing and refreshing. Its scent, pleasant at all times, becomes stronger and more cleansing when the leaves are bruised or steeped in water, providing a +3 bonus to appropriate Healing tests or rolls to resist Weariness. Double the Healing bonus if the character using *athelas* has the Healing Hands edge. Characters exposed to the scent of *athelas* recover lost Weariness Levels twice as quickly as normal.

INQUIRE (BEARING)

Social; Untrained

' "I am sick of questions and curiosity about my doings, I suppose," he thought. "What an inquisitive lot they all are!" '

— Frodo, The Fellowship of the Ring

Through the strength of your personality—and by knowing how to talk to people, and who to talk to—you have great skill at uncovering secrets and learning things others prefer to keep hidden.

Sample Specialties: Converse, Interrogate.

Test: You make Inquire tests to gather general information about a person or place, pursue a rumour, or locate a person or thing. The higher your test result, the more reliable the information you obtain tends to be. Of course, the Narrator determines exactly what you learn. A successful Inquire test isn't a guarantee of wholly accurate information—or even any information at all. The difficulty depends on the obscurity of the subject you're inquiring about:

Simple (TN 5): Learn an obvious fact (which inn serves the best beer in town).

Routine (TN 10): Learn a simple fact (where to find a low-ranking burglar for a job of treasure-hunting; the name and location of the only Dwarf in town).

Challenging (TN 15): Learn an obscure fact (the name and location of the only person who witnessed a suspicious person leaving town).

Difficult (TN 20): Learn a fact people wish to keep secret (where to find a wanted thief).

Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Learn an extremely secret fact (that Gríma is a traitor). This is often based on piecing together dozens of conversations and other tidbits of information gathered over months.

Note that the specialty Inquire (Interrogate) differs from Intimidate (Torture). The former involves using willpower and harsh questioning to convince the subject to reveal information. The latter, a tool of the Shadow, involves wringing answers from unwilling victims by application of pain.

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: Inquire works best in cities and towns in which you find many people to talk to. In rural areas where few people live, you may suffer test result penalties of –2 or greater, or be unable to use Inquire at all.

AFFINITY: Persuade or Intimidate may provide an affinity bonus if they would help convince people to talk to you. The same applies to appropriate Lore skills

ACTION TIME: Full round.

EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

INSIGHT (PERCEPTION)

Social; Untrained

> *'"I have read thy mind and its policies."'*
> *— Denethor, The Return of the King*

You see deeper than other people, into the hearts and minds of those you meet, easily discerning the motives for their deeds. Your senses tell you when lies are told, when things are not right, and even when someone near you is hiding great power or force of personality.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: None.

TEST: Some Insight tests are opposed tests against the skill another person uses to deceive, bluff, dupe, or conceal motives and intentions from the character, such as Persuade (Fast Talk), Guise, or even just Bearing. If a person does not actively try to trick the character, but simply masks his motivations and feelings for some reason, the Narrator can establish a difficulty based on how well the person dissembles. The same applies for persons trying to hide, or at least not to reveal, their power (however defined) or their impressiveness (their Bearing or their ranks in Inspire, Intimidate, and like skills).

Simple (TN 5): Discerning poorly concealed motivations or feelings; discerning a person's unconcealed Bearing.

Routine (TN 10): Discerning a typical person's concealed motivations or feelings.

Challenging (TN 15): Discerning well-concealed motivations or feelings.

Difficult (TN 20): Discerning very well concealed motivations or feelings.

Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Discerning deeply hidden motivations or feelings.

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: If the target is close kin, a boon companion, or spouse to the character, you gain a +2 test result bonus. When you try to discern Bearing, Intimidate, or the like, the Narrator may apply the target's attribute modifier—or a like modifier calculated from ranks in the skill—as a bonus to your test, for it is hard to hide true power and majesty.

ACTION TIME: Full round.

EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

INSPIRE (BEARING)

Social; Untrained

> *'But the hosts of Mordor were enheartened, and filled with a new lust and fury they came yelling to the onset.'*
> *— The Return of the King*

Through nobility of spirit, heroic deeds, or powerful will, you have the ability to inspire others, dispelling their fears and encouraging them to bolder deeds and greater effort.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: None.

TEST: You can use Inspire in several ways. First, you can kindle fires of will and courage in those companions near you, helping them resist fear and confusion. Make an opposed test, using your Inspire against the Intimidate test result that unmanned them. If you succeed, they may all make another Willpower reaction test against the fear (or like effect), with a +1 bonus for every level of success over marginal that you made. For instance, if you gain a superior success, your companions gain a +2 bonus to their Willpower test.

Second, even when those around you have not felt the bite of terror, you

can rouse their heroism. To do so, make a TN 10 Inspire test. If you succeed, you can grant your companions a +1 bonus to apply to any appropriate test (typically Armed Combat) in the next round. For every additional level of success on your Inspire text, you can extend the effect for +1 round or increase the bonus by +1.

Third, you can heighten the morale of your forces by using Inspire in an opposed test against the Intimidate or other roll used to try to break your unit. See page 241 for details.

Fourth, once per game session—or more frequently, at the Narrator's option—you can use Inspire to reduce the Weariness felt by you and your comrades. The TN for the test is 5 if the most weary character in the group is Winded, 10 if he's Tired, 15 if he's Weary, 20 if he's Spent, and 25 if he's Exhausted. If you succeed, everyone you inspire automatically recovers one lost Weariness Level. An extraordinary success allows the recovery of two lost levels.

Most uses of Inspire require you to speak to those whose hearts you would lift, and that they be able to hear your words. But sometimes, as when Aragorn unfurled his banner and brought hope renewed to the defenders of Minas Tirith, deeds alone suffice.

The effects of Inspire last as long as seems appropriate to the Narrator. In some cases, inspiration may linger for days or even for a lifetime. But in most instances, they only last a little while after the source of the inspiration leaves, turns his attention elsewhere, or changes his attitude.

Additional Modifiers: If your side appears to be winning the battle, you receive a +2 (or greater) test result bonus. If your side seems to be losing, you suffer a corresponding penalty.

Affinity: Intimidate (typically Majesty or Power) may provide an affinity bonus in appropriate situations.

Action Time: 1 action.

Extended Test: Yes.

INTIMIDATE (BEARING)

Social; Untrained

'In rode the Lord of the Nazgûl. A great black shape against the fires beyond he loomed up, grown to a vast menace of despair.'

— The Return of the King

So great is your power or presence that you can cow your enemies, causing foes to fear your majesty or power or simply to feel the dread and terror you inspire.

Sample Specialties: Fear, Majesty, Power, Torture.

Test: Intimidate resembles Inspire in some ways, yet it serves not as an aid for your allies, but as a weapon to use against those who oppose you. It requires an opposed test against the target's Willpower—or, in some cases, Inspire. After determining the results, consult the Fear Table on page 233. That tells you the result. When using the Majesty or Power Specialties, use the Fear Table but adapt the terms and results to make them more appropriate. See page 241 for details on using Intimidate in mass-combat situations.

Intimidate need not be used only to instil fear. Often heroes must persuade others with Intimidate, as when Aragorn used Intimidate (Majesty) to convince Éomer to aid him. In such cases, compare the desired result (which should of course be indicated by the character's words or actions) to the Fear Table results to determine what level of effect is necessary. Convincing a guard to let you pass unhindered might only require a 'Panicked' result, while persuading a reluctant warrior to join your noble but dangerous cause might require an 'Unmanned' result.

In combat, a character can use Intimidate—for an action cost of 1—to make an opponent hesitate, back down, or falter. If the character succeeds with an Intimidate test against the target's Willpower test and attains at least an 'Unnerved' result, he may select one of the following bonuses: +1 bonus on his initiative test against the target next round, +1 test result bonus for attacks against the target that round or the next round, or a +1 bonus on attempts to parry or dodge the target's attacks that round or next round. An 'Unmanned' result can double one of these bonuses, cause the target to flee, or elicit any other reaction the Narrator considers appropriate.

Most uses of Intimidate require you to speak, if for no other reason than to inform the target why he should feel fear or do whatever else you intend. At other times, your actions alone can cause your enemies to succumb to dread. The Narrator judges the effects—both of your words and of your deeds—when you try to Intimidate another.

The effects last as long as seems appropriate to the Narrator. In some cases (particularly when the servants of Sauron use Intimidate (Fear)), the terror may linger for days or even for a lifetime (see also the spell *Shadow of Fear,* page 186). But in most instances, the effects only last a little while after the source of the intimidation leaves, turns his attention elsewhere, or changes his attitude

Only servants of the Enemy should take the specialties Fear and Torture. While the majesty or power of the Wise may bring fear to the hearts of those who serve the Shadow, those of true heroism and nobility do not seek to inspire terror in others.

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: The Fear Table (page 233) has a list of various modifiers that apply to efforts to inspire fear. By extension this can be applied to many other uses of Intimidate. Additionally, if the Narrator feels an attempt to Intimidate is dramatically appropriate, or that a character's recent actions might dismay his enemies, he can grant bonuses. Conversely, she can do the same for Willpower rolls to resist intimidation by the Enemy.

A target's hostile or aggressive interaction stance (see 'Social Modifiers,' page 220) does not make it harder to Intimidate him. It's assumed that anyone a character wants to intimidate is automatically hostile (or at least neutral) to him. The target's ability to make a Willpower test to resist the effects of Intimidate adequately reflects that.

AFFINITY: Depending on the situation, the purpose of a character's use of Intimidate, and how well he speaks, Inspire, Persuade, and Debate might each grant an affinity bonus.

ACTION TIME: 1 action.

EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

JUMP (STRENGTH)

Physical; Untrained

'Down from the wall leapt Gimli with a fierce cry that echoed in the cliffs.'

— The Two Towers

You can leap with agility, covering greater distances than most and landing without harm.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: None.

TEST: The difficulty of a Jump test depends on how far the character wishes to leap:

Simple (TN 5): Leap 2 yards horizontal or 1 yard vertical while not in combat.

Routine (TN 10): Leap 2 yards horizontal or 1 yard vertical in combat.

Challenging (TN 15): Leap 3–4 yards horizontal or 2 yards vertical in combat.

Difficult (TN 20): Leap 5–8 yards horizontal or 3–4 yards vertical in combat.

Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Leap 9–16 yards horizontal or 5–8 yards vertical in combat.

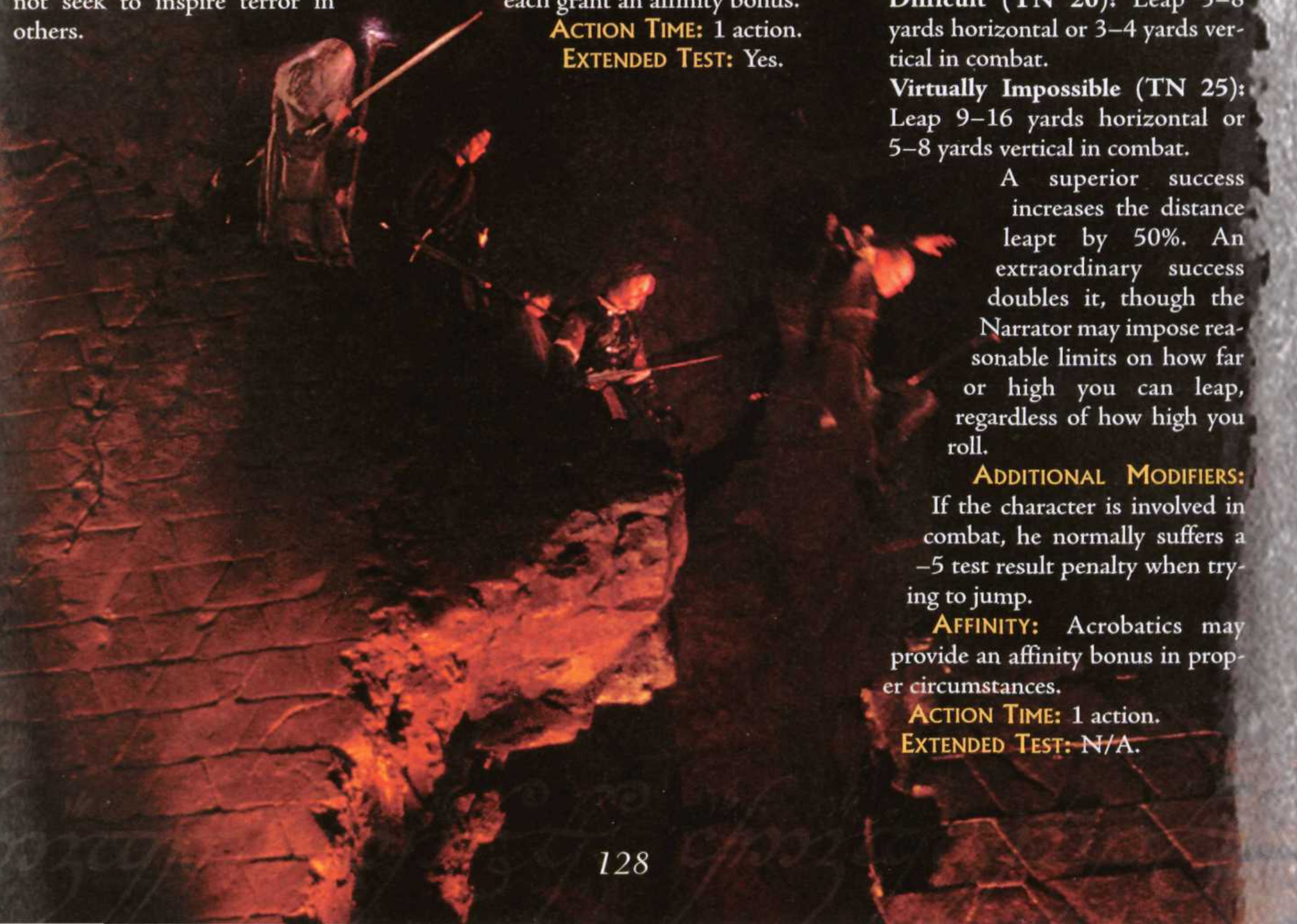
A superior success increases the distance leapt by 50%. An extraordinary success doubles it, though the Narrator may impose reasonable limits on how far or high you can leap, regardless of how high you roll.

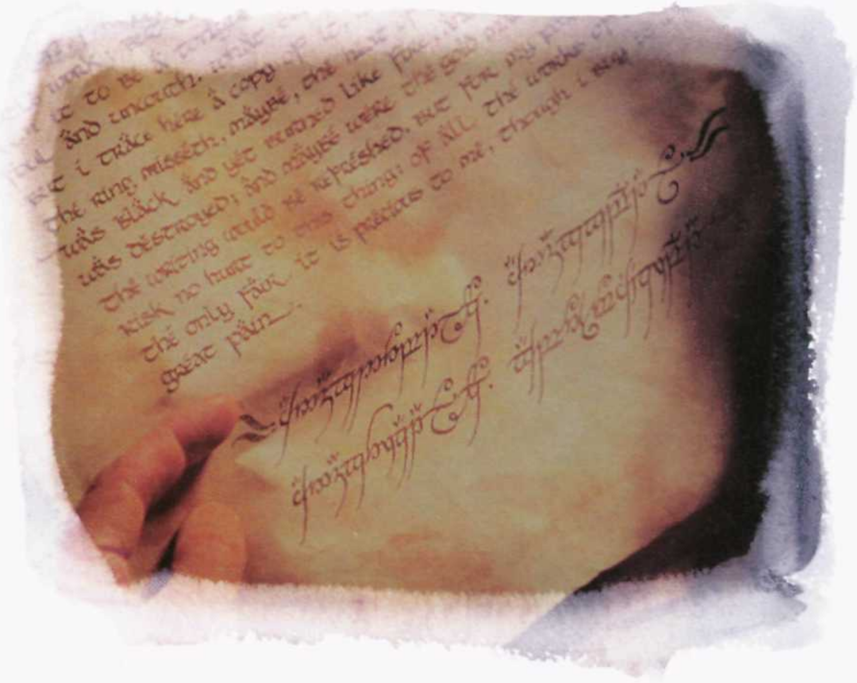
ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: If the character is involved in combat, he normally suffers a –5 test result penalty when trying to jump.

AFFINITY: Acrobatics may provide an affinity bonus in proper circumstances.

ACTION TIME: 1 action.

EXTENDED TEST: N/A.





LANGUAGE (WITS)

Academic; Trained

'"And yet there lie in his hoard many records that few now can read, even of the lore-masters, for their scripts and tongues have become dark to later men."'
— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

You can speak a language other than your native one—and write it as well, if it has a written form. Each Language is a separate skill in this skill group. Examples include the Black Speech, Dunlendish, Khuzdul, Orkish (see below), Quenya, Rohiric, Silvan, Sindarin, and Westron (the Common Tongue).

TEST: Make a Language test when you try to read, speak, or understand a language other than your native tongue(s). The difficulty depends on the complexity of the speech.

Simple (TN 5): Simple phrases or sentences (asking directions).

Routine (TN 10): Simple conversation ('What news from Bree?').

Challenging (TN 15): Complex conversation (speaking like a native, understanding obscure idioms or dialects).

Difficult (TN 20): Subtle or obscure conversation (discussing deep lore with a magician or loremaster).

Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Understanding ancient versions of the language.

Characters who learn Orkish must specify the place or tribe where they learned it, since Orcs from one region or tribe generally cannot understand the speech of another. When they meet, they use debased forms of Westron to communicate. Ranking Orc-captains from Mordor also know Black Speech, but generally use it only when conversing amonst themselves.

No player character may learn Entish as a language. It's too complex and difficult to pronounce for non-Ents to speak. Few non-Dwarven characters learn Khuzdul (Dwarvish), for the Dwarves keep the tongue secret, rarely teaching it to outsiders.

ACTION TIME: 1 action.
EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

LEGERDEMAIN (NIMBLENESS)

Physical; Trained

'Tom laughed again...he spun the Ring in the air—and it vanished with a flash. Frodo gave a cry—and Tom leaned forward and handed it back...with a smile.'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

Like a juggler or a thief, you can manipulate objects with skill and dexterity, making them seem to disappear.

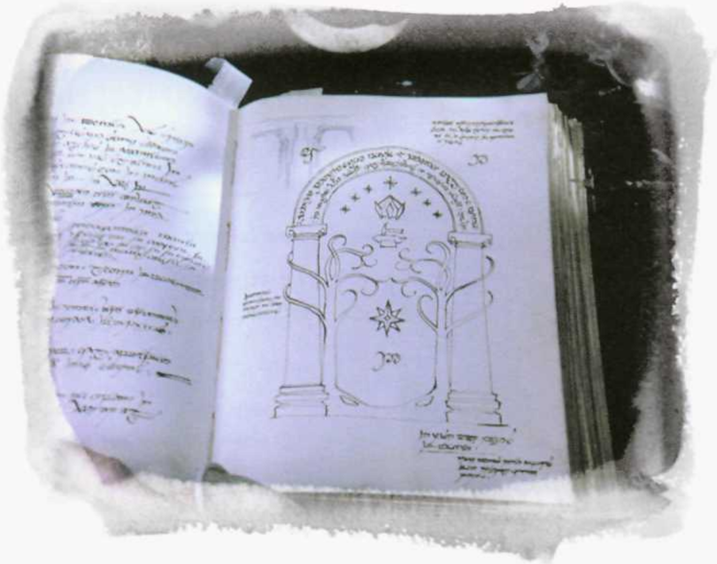
SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: Pick Pocket, Prestidigitation, Open Lock.

TEST: Most uses of Legerdemain are opposed tests pitting your deftness against the Observe (Spot) skill of the victim or onlooker. If he beats your test result, he's seen through your trick—which may have dangerous consequences for you, if you were trying to pick his pocket!

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: If you wear gloves, you suffer a –1 test result penalty.

AFFINITY: You gain a +1 affinity bonus if you know Observe (Spot), since you can judge what others might look for.

ACTION TIME: 1 action.
EXTENDED TEST: No.



LORE (WITS)

Academic; Trained

' "There are few among mortal Men who know more of Orcs; and I do not hunt them in this fashion out of choice." '
— Aragorn, The Two Towers

You are learned, possessing much lore and wisdom of some subject. Each type of Lore (see below) is a separate skill in this skill group, with its own specialties.

GROUP: The members, practices, history, and traditions of some group of people are known to you. Specialities include the Dúnedain, Gondorian Nobility, the Five Wizards, the Rangers, and rogues.

HISTORY: You are well versed in history, both of Middle-earth in general and some realm or subject in particular. Specialities include Dwarves, Elves, Gondor, and Rohan.

RACE: You know much about a particular race: where its members live, how they think and act, and their customs and traditions. Specialities include Beornings, Dwarves, Elves, Hobbits, Men, Orcs, Rohirrim, and Trolls.

REALM: You are learned in the geography, history, and other lore pertaining to a particular kingdom or land. Usually you have obtained this lore by travelling in that land. Specialities include Arnor, Arthedain, Bree, Eriador, Gondor, Harad, Ithilien, Mordor, and the Shire.

OTHER: You can define any other body of lore known to you, like magic. Specialities could include Denethor II, Gondorian Poetry, Hobbit Genealogy, *Palantíri*, or Rings of Power.

TEST: You must make a test to answer questions pertaining to your lore or to recall obscure facts known to you through study or long experience.

Simple (TN 5): Remember a basic, significant fact (a major war between two realms).

Routine (TN 10): Remember specific facts (the participants and captains in that war).

Challenging (TN 15): Remember obscure facts (new weapons used in that war).

Difficult (TN 20): Remember extremely obscure facts (all the history of those new weapons and who created them).

Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Remember extremely obscure, distantly related facts (how that war affected the development of a nearby realm that arose two centuries later).

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: You receive a +2 test result bonus to remember or locate information about your native race or realm.

ACTION TIME: 1 action.

EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

MIMICRY (BEARING)

Physical; Trained

' "The three of us could not challenge a hundred, so we went ahead and spoke with feigned voices, leading them on into the wood." '
— Haldir, The Fellowship of the Ring

You can imitate the voices of men and beasts, allowing you to trick others or to signal your comrades without alerting your enemies.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: Beasts, Voices.

TEST: Most uses of Mimicry depend on the complexity of the sound you try to imitate. However, if a listener suspects what you are doing, Mimicry becomes an opposed test against his Observe (Hear).

Simple (TN 5): Imitate the voice of a person of the same gender and race as you; imitate a simple, common animal cry.

Routine (TN 10): Imitate the voice of a person of the same race but different gender than you; imitate most animal noises.

Challenging (TN 15): Imitate the voice of a person of the same gender but different race than you.

Difficult (TN 20): Imitate the voice of a person of different gender and race than you.

Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Imitate the voice of a person the listener knows very well.

ACTION TIME: 1 action.

EXTENDED TEST: No.

OBSERVE (PERCEPTION)

Physical; Untrained

> *'[A]ll round him were the companies of the Rohirrim. He could smell the horses in the dark, and could hear...their soft stamping on the needle-covered ground.'*
>
> *— The Return of the King*

You are alert and wary, possessing a keen eye. You are apt to sense unusual or noteworthy things.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: Hear, *Sense Power*, Smell, Spot, Taste, Touch. You can only select the *Sense Power* specialty if you have the *Sense Power* magical ability or can cast the *Sense Power* spell.

TEST: In many cases, Observe requires an opposed test against such skills as Conceal, Legerdemain, or Stealth. If no one actively opposes your ability to observe, the difficulty of the test depends on the size, cover, and obviousness of what you're trying to perceive.

Simple (TN 5): Observing something obvious (an approaching storm).

Routine (TN 10): Observing something average (the sound of someone walking towards you without being stealthy).

Challenging (TN 15): Observing something small (a bird in a leafy tree; whispering).

Difficult (TN 20): Observing something tiny (a needle in a haystack).

Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Observing something minuscule.

Most people take the Spot specialty, since they rely on sight more than their other senses.

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: If the object stands out against its environment (it has contrasting colours or glows brightly, it's an unusually strong or sweet smell, it's loud and jarring), apply a +2 (or greater) test result bonus. Conversely, trying to perceive objects that blend in with their surroundings entails a –1 (or greater) test result penalty.

AFFINITY: Observe gains an affinity bonus from Conceal.

ACTION TIME: 1 action.

EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

PERFORM (BEARING)

Social; Untrained

> *'"Where did you come by that, Sam?" asked Pippin. "I've never heard those words before."*
>
> *"It's out of his own head, of course," said Frodo.'*
>
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

You are a skilled entertainer, able to play music, create songs and poems, or tell amusing stories.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: Compose Verse, Play Specific Instrument (Harp, Horn, and so forth), Sing, Tell Stories.

Test: The difficulty of a Perform test depends upon the nature and complexity of your attempted performance:

Simple (TN 5): Compose a simple verse; play a simple song.

Routine (TN 10): Compose an average verse; play an average song.

Challenging (TN 15): Compose a complicated verse; play a complicated song.

Difficult (TN 20): Compose a complex verse; play a complex song.

Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Flawlessly compose and sing a complex verse on the spot.

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: A receptive, friendly audience may provide a +1 test result bonus, while a harsh, critical, or heckling one may impose a −1 (or greater) test result penalty.

ACTION TIME: Varies depending on nature of performance, but usually at least 1 minute, if not longer.

EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

PERSUADE (BEARING)

Social; Untrained

> *'Mostly they remembered only that [Saruman's voice] seemed wise and reasonable, and desire awoke in them by swift agreement to seem wise themselves.'*
>
> *— The Two Towers*

You possess great personal force and skill with words, and you can use them to convince others to agree with you.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: Charm, Fast Talk, Oratory.

TEST: Persuade represents a character's ability to convince others with charm, personality, and honeyed words rather than reason or logic, which requires Debate instead. You use it in an opposed test against the target's Wisdom (such as when you try to convince a beautiful maiden to stroll with you in the garden) or against another person's Persuade (such as when two minstrels both try to convince a king to become their patron).

The effects of a successful Persuade test last indefinitely: as long as the Narrator believes they should, or until some other person or event changes the target's mind. But Persuade is not domination. It can never force the target to do what the speaker suggests, and the target always remains free to reject absurd proposals, regardless of the test result.

AFFINITY: Debate provides an affinity bonus to Persuade. So does any speicifc knowledge or ability with a skill related to the subject being discussed, such as Perform when trying to convince someone of the quality of a song. You may also get a bonus if you can fluently speak the native language of the person you are trying to win over.

ACTION TIME: Full round.

EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

RANGED COMBAT (NIMBLENESS)

Physical; Untrained

> *'His bow was bent, but one gleaned arrow was all that he had left...ready to shoot the first Orc that should dare to approach the stair.'*
>
> *— The Two Towers*

Skilled with bow or javelin, you can slay your foes at a distance, making them fear to come within your range. Use the skills within this group to fight with ranged weapons. Some weapons are grouped together under a single skill, shown on the list below. More exotic weapons can be treated as individual skills.

Ranged Combat Skills

BOWS: You are handy with bows of all sorts You can further specialize by weapon type, including longbow, shortbow, and so on.

SPEARS: You are handy with hurling hafted weapons of all sorts You can further specialize by weapon type, including javelin, spear, and so on.

THROWN WEAPONS: You are handy with smaller, thrown weapons of all sorts. You can further specialize by weapon type, including dagger, stone, and so on.

TEST: Most Ranged Combat tests are standard tests, with a difficulty based on the target's Defence and the range to the target, as defined by the weapon (see Chapter Eight). The greater your degree of success, the worse the injury your attack causes. A disastrous failure can damage your weapon or cause you to accidentally shoot a comrade

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: See Chapter Nine for details on dodging, modifiers, and damage.

ACTION TIME: 1 action.

EXTENDED TEST: N/A.

RIDE (BEARING)

Physical; Untrained

'With astonishing speed they checked their steeds, wheeled, and came charging round.'

— The Two Towers

You are a skilled rider, able to handle a mount in battle.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: Specific Animal (Hell-hawk, Horse, etc).

TEST: In most situations, riding requires no test. Only when difficulties arise, you try to perform a stunt (such as leaping an obstacle), or you take your mount into battle, must you make a test.

Simple (TN 5): Performing an easy stunt (leaping a low, small obstacle).

Routine (TN 10): Performing a simple stunt (leaping a low or small obstacle); keeping your mount calm in a typical battle.

Challenging (TN 15): Performing a challenging stunt (leaping a medium obstacle); keeping your mount calm near something frightening (say, a horse near a *mûmak* or Olog).

Difficult (TN 20): Performing a difficult stunt (leaping a large obstacle).

Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Keeping your mount calm near the Lord of the Nazgûl.

A character with Ride also knows how to care for his mount.

See page 235 for further rules about horses and riding.

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: If your mount has suffered injury, you suffer the same penalties for your Ride tests as if you were injured. If both you and your mount are injured, add the penalties together.

ACTION TIME: Controlling a mount in combat is usually a free action, but it sometimes requires 1 action if the horse is unruly or fearful (see page 237).

EXTENDED TEST: N/A.

RUN (STRENGTH)

Physical; Untrained

'During all its long hours of cloud and fitful sun they hardly paused, now striding, now running, as if no weariness could quench the fire that burned them.'

— The Two Towers

You can run with great speed, covering ground and terrain more swiftly than others.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: N/A.

TEST: Ordinarily, running requires no test. Only if you have to run in battle or try to run further in a round than normal (see Chapter Nine) must you make a test. The Narrator may impose reasonable limits on how far you can run in a given period of time, regardless of how high you roll.

Simple (TN 5): Run 12–18 yards while not in combat.

Routine (TN 10): Run 12–18 yards in combat; run 19–40 yards while not in combat.

Challenging (TN 15): Run 19–40 yards in combat.

Difficult (TN 20): Run 41–80 yards in combat.

Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Run 81 or more yards in combat.

ACTION TIME: Full round (see page 216).

EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

SEA-CRAFT (WITS)

Physical; Trained

' "There are some among you who can handle boats: Legolas, whose folk know the swift Forest River; and Boromir of Gondor; and Aragorn the traveller." '
— Celeborn, The Fellowship of the Ring

You know how to steer a boat and sail, and you can even build and repair ships.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: Boating, Sailing, Shipwright.

TEST: Sea-craft tests are standard ones. The TN often depends on the water on which you travel.

Simple (TN 5): Steering a boat down a slow, easy river; sailing a ship through calm seas.

Routine (TN 10): Steering a boat down a fast, easy river; sailing a ship through typical seas; ordinary ship maintenance and repairs.

Challenging (TN 15): Steering a boat down a slow, choppy river; sailing a ship through rough seas.

Difficult (TN 20): Steering a boat down a fast, choppy river; sailing a ship through very rough seas.

Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Steering a boat down a very fast, choppy river; sailing a ship through extremely rough seas.

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: If you know only the Boating Speciality, you suffer a –2 test result penalty on any use of Sea-craft pertaining to seagoing ships.

ACTION TIME: Full round.

EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

SEARCH (PERCEPTION)

Physical; Untrained

'Gollum was cursing and wailing away in the gloom, not very far off from the sound of it. He was on his island, scrabbling here and there, searching and seeking in vain.'
— The Hobbit.

Sharp-eyed and alert, you can find things that remain hidden to other men.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: None.

TEST: You use Search in opposed tests against Conceal, Stealth, and other skills pertaining to hiding or concealing people or things. If necessary, the Narrator can simply set a difficulty for finding a hidden object based on her estimate of how well someone concealed it or how cunningly it was made.

AFFINITY: Conceal, Observe, and Stealth all provide affinity bonuses to Search.

ACTION TIME: At least a full round, often 1 minute or more.

EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

SIEGECRAFT (WITS)

Physical; Trained

'[A]nd soon yet more companies of the enemy were swiftly setting up, each behind the cover of a trench, great engines for the casting of missiles.'
— The Return of the King

You are skilled at the operation of siege engines and in the tactics and planning of extended siege operations. You further know much about the besieging of fortifications and cities.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: Defence, Specific Siege Engine (Battering Ram, Blasting Fire, Catapult, and so forth), Unit Leadership.

TEST: Tests for using siege engines are standard tests, with a difficulty based on the range of the weapon. (See Chapter Nine for more information on specific engines.) But when you use Siegecraft to determine the best way to establish—or break—a siege, you make an opposed test against the enemy captain's Siegecraft.

Simple (TN 5): Hitting a target at point blank range.

Routine (TN 10): Hitting a target at short range.

Challenging (TN 15): Hitting a target at medium range.
Difficult (TN 20): Hitting a target at long range.
Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Hitting a target beyond long range.

Additional Modifiers: See page 242.

Affinity: Stonecraft may sometimes provide an affinity bonus when attacking with Siegecraft (see page 243).

Action Time: At least a full round, but usually 1 minute or longer. (See page 240 for rules on mass battles.)

Extended Test: Yes.

Smithcraft (Strength)

Physical; Trained

'There hammer on the anvil smote,
There chisel clove, there graver wrote,
There forged was blade,
and bound was hilt[.]'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

You can craft metals of all sorts, creating sharp swords, strong armour, and delicate works of great beauty. If you are an Elf of the Noldor, you may even possess the ancient skill of crafting gems.

Sample Specialties: Armoursmith, Goldsmith, Jewelsmith (Noldorin Elves only), Weaponsmith.

Test: Smithcraft tests are standard tests, with a difficulty based on the quality or complexity of the work attempted:

Simple (TN 5): Creating ordinary everyday metal objects (farming tools).
Routine (TN 10): Creating ordinary small or simple metal weapons (daggers, maces, spearheads, arrowheads).
Challenging (TN 15): Creating ordinary large or complex metal weapons (swords, axes), creating armour, creating simple jewellery.
Difficult (TN 20): Creating an elaborate work (most types of jewellery, an ordinary weapon with engraving and gold inlay).
Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Crafting an elaborate, delicate work (Bilbo's *mithril* mail, the Nauglamír).

Tests to repair an object are at one category of difficulty less than for creating them

Affinity: You receive an affinity bonus if you have a skill that lets you use what you create. For example, Armed Combat: Blades helps when creating a sword, and Siegecraft helps when creating the iron fittings for a catapult.

Action Time: To make a simple repair to a metal object typically takes 10–30 minutes. Creating a weapon, suit of armour, or other metal object usually requires several hours or days, even weeks or months. To determine how long a particular task takes, the Narrator multiplies the TN by some period of time (usually hours or days). Alternatively, the Narrator can assign the following flat rates: one day per point of protection a suit of armour provides, or four hours per point of damage a weapon can do with a maximum roll.

Extended Test: Yes.

Stealth (Nimbleness)

Physical; Untrained

' "I have quick ears...and though I cannot disappear, I have hunted many wild and wary things and I can usually avoid being seen, if I wish." '
— Aragorn, The Fellowship of the Ring

You know how to hide yourself, how to shadow others without being seen, and how to move silently.

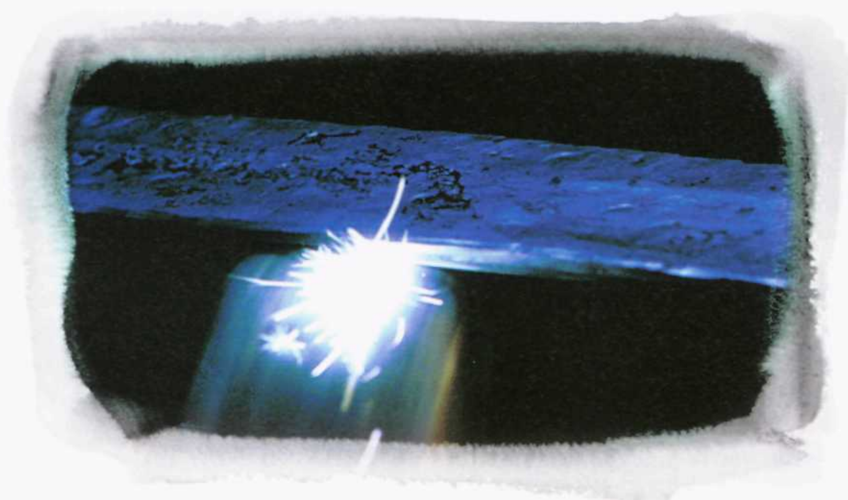
Sample Specialties: Hide, Shadow, Sneak, Surveill.

Test: Stealth requires an opposed test against an appropriate Observe test by whomever you are trying to hide from.

Additional Modifiers: Visual and physical cover, or loud background noises, often aid Stealth attempts. (See Chapter Nine, under 'Physical Test Modifiers'.) Trying to move quietly across dry leaves, twigs, or other noisy surfaces, entails a –2 (or greater) test result penalty. Trying to use Stealth while running entails a –5 test result penalty.

Affinity: Observe provides an affinity bonus, since you know what others look for. Survival provides a bonus when you use Stealth in natural areas.

Special: At 6th, 9th, and 12th ranks, you may choose one of the fol-



lowing environments to receive a +1 bonus for Stealth tests there: forest, mountains, plains, southern wastes, underground, or urban. If you choose the same environment more than once, the bonuses add up.

Action Time: 1 action.

Extended Test: Yes.

Stonecraft (Strength)

Physical; Trained

> *'"Give me a year and a hundred of my kin and I would make this a place that armies would break upon like water."'*
>
> *— Gimli, The Two Towers*

You are skilled at delving and building with stone. You can dig mines, build strongholds and fortresses, and construct walls.

Sample Specialties: Building, Fortification, Mining.

Test: The most common use of Stonecraft by PCs is to improve existing fortifications or to help besiegers destroy walls and towers. The difficulty for such tests depends on the existing nature and strength of the stronghold, the availability of materials and workers, and like factors. Attempts at standard delving, mining, or building are also standard tests, with a difficulty based on the complexity of the task.

Simple (TN 5): Improving, or aiding an attack on, a very weak or poorly-built fortification (the ruins on Weathertop); standard delving and mining.

Routine (TN 10): Improving, or aiding an attack on, a weak or poorly built fortification (typically with Protection 1–3, Structure 2–20); building a typical stone structure or wall.

Challenging (TN 15): Improving, aiding an attack on, or building an average fortification, such as the Tower of Cirith Ungol (typically with Protection 4–7, Structure 8–150); delving and mining in easily-collapsed stone.

Difficult (TN 20): Improving, aiding an attack on, or building a strong or well-built fortification, such as Minas Tirith or the Hornburg (typically with Protection 8–14, Structure 20–180).

Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Improving, aiding an attack on, or building a very strong or well-built fortification, such as Orthanc or Barad-dûr (typically with Protection 10–20, Structure 150–400).

Additional Modifiers: If the character only has poor-quality stone to work with, negative equipment modifiers apply.

Affinity: Craft: Stonecarving provides an affinity bonus—and makes the structure look better.

Action Time: Making minor repairs or the like usually requires at least 10–30 minutes. Extensive building or mining tasks can take days, weeks, or months, depending on the size of the structure or tunnel.

Extended Test: Yes.

Survival (Perception)

Physical; Untrained

> *'"There is food in the wild," said Strider; "berry, root, and herb; and I have some skill as a hunter at need."'*
>
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

You know how to live in the wilds: how to find and hunt game, snare small animals, make fire, forage for edible or useful plants, and protect yourself from the elements.

Sample Specialties: Specific Environment (Forests, Jungles, Mountains, Northern Wastes, Oceans, Southern Wastes, and so forth).

Test: Survival is a standard test. The difficulty depends on the environment you're in. You can usually find food and shelter in a forest with ease, but doing the same in the wastes of Harad is another matter.

Simple (TN 5): Determining if a plant is edible.

Routine (TN 10): Locating food, water, and shelter in a tropical, subtropical, or temperate environment; starting a fire.

Challenging (TN 15): Locating food, water, and shelter in most mountainous regions.

Difficult (TN 20): Locating food, water, and shelter in the southern wastes.

Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Locating food, water, and shelter in the northern wastes.

Survival normally depends on Perception. You have to find the right plants or a sign that animals live nearby. However, the Narrator may have you apply Wits to remember if a particular root is edible, Nimbleness to create a snare, and so forth.

Survival does not allow you to use weapons to kill animals (that requires Armed Combat or Ranged Combat) or track them (that requires Track).

Many animals also have Survival as a skill, representing their ability to feed and shelter themselves in the wild.

Additional Modifiers: In poor weather—hard or persistent rain, winter or snowfall, long drought—characters suffer a –4 (or greater) test result penalty to some Survival tasks such as starting fires, finding adequate shelter, or gathering food or hunting.

Affinity: You gain an affinity bonus with Observe, since that makes you better at spotting things. When hunting, Track provides an affinity bonus. Lore of the region or realm you're trying to survive in also grants a bonus.

Action Time: Starting a fire takes 1 minute. Searching for edible plants, locating drinkable water, hunting game, or building a shelter usually takes at least one hour, and may take many hours.

Extended Test: Yes.

SWIM (STRENGTH)

Physical; Untrained

'"I was in the company that held the bridge, until it was cast down behind us. Four only were saved by swimming: my brother and myself and two others."'
— Boromir, The Fellowship of the Ring

You swim with speed and strength, crossing rivers and lakes that would daunt other men.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: None.

TEST: Ordinarily, swimming requires no test. Only if you have to swim in battle or try to swim further in a round than normal (see Chapter Nine) must you make a test. A superior success increases your movement rate by 50%. An extraordinary success doubles it, though the Narrator may impose reasonable limits on how far you can swim in a given period of time, regardless of how high you roll. If you suffer a disastrous failure and are in deep water, you may sink and begin to drown.

Simple (TN 5): Swimming up to 2 yards while not in combat.

Routine (TN 10): Swimming up to 2 yards in battle, or 3–4 yards while not in combat.

Challenging (TN 15): Swimming 3–4 yards in battle, or 5–8 yards while not in combat.

Difficult (TN 20): Swimming 5–8 yards in battle, or 9–16 yards while not in combat.

Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Swimming 9 or more yards in battle, or 17 or more yards while not in combat.

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: Rough waters impose a –2 (or greater) test result penalty. If you are encumbered by armour or a great burden, you suffer an additional –2 (or greater) test result penalty.

ACTION TIME: 1 action.

EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

TEAMSTER (STRENGTH)

Physical; Untrained

'An odd-looking waggon laden with odd-looking packages rolled into Hobbiton one evening and toiled up the Hill to Bag End.'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

You know how to drive carts and wains and—if an Easterling warrior—perhaps chariots as well.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: Carts, Chariots, Wains.

TEST: Ordinarily, Teamster requires no test. Only when the ground or other conditions make it likely that your vehicle could get stuck or fall over must you make a test.

Simple (TN 5): Driving on a paved road.

Routine (TN 10): Driving on a muddy dirt road; driving a chariot in battle.

Challenging (TN 15): Driving on rough ground.

Difficult (TN 20): Driving on very rough ground.
Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Driving on extremely rough ground.

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: If the animals pulling your cart or waggon are unruly, panicky, or stubborn, apply a –2 (or greater) test result penalty.

AFFINITY: Ride provides an affinity bonus, since it reflects your skill with animals.

ACTION TIME: Full round.

EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

TRACK (WITS)

Physical; Trained

> *'"[A] heavy boot might leave no print here..."*
> *"That would not baffle a Ranger...A bent blade is enough for Aragorn to read."'*
> *— Legolas and Gimli, The Two Towers*

You can read signs left upon the ground by those who walk upon it, discerning how swiftly they passed or whether they carried burdens. You can also listen to the ground to hear the movement of groups of men at a great distance.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: Specific Animal Type (Canine, Feline, and so forth), Specific Race (Dwarves, Men, Orcs, and so forth), Scent.

TEST: Tracking is normally a standard test, with a difficulty based on the type of terrain. If the person you are tracking has Track himself, he can use it to hide the signs he leaves, forcing you to make an opposed test instead.

You can also use Track to roughly follow the movements of people by listening to the ground. This provides little information, save whether the group is large or small, afoot or horsed, but even that can prove helpful at times.

Simple (TN 5): Following tracks through mud, new snow, or the like; interpreting high-quality tracks; listening to movements within 1 mile.
Routine (TN 10): Following tracks across packed soil, grass, or the like; interpreting average-quality tracks; listening to movements within 2–4 miles.
Challenging (TN 15): Following tracks across hard earth, gravel, or the like; interpreting poor-quality tracks; listening to movements within 5–8 miles.
Difficult (TN 20): Following tracks across stone or after rain, snow, or other phenomena obscure them; interpreting very poor-quality tracks; listening to movements within 9–16 miles.
Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Following tracks across pavement; listening to movements 17 or more miles away.

Track depends on Wits because the character has to know how to interpret tracks and other signs. The Narrator may have a character use Perception simply to find signs.

The Scent specialty is for animals and Orcs, who can often follow trails using their sense of smell.

ADDITIONAL MODIFIERS: The TNs above assume you track one person. For every doubling of the size of the group (2, 3–4, 5–8, and so forth), you receive a +1 test result bonus. If your quarry is on horse, he usually cannot hide his tracks, and you receive a +1 test result bonus to hear him through the ground.

AFFINITY: Observe provides an affinity bonus.

ACTION TIME: Finding and interpreting a track or trail usually requires 1 minute per category of difficulty: 1 minute for a Simple task, 2 minutes for a Routine task, and so forth. Actually following a trail may take hours or days, depending on how far ahead of the character his quarry is.

EXTENDED TEST: Yes.

UNARMED COMBAT (NIMBLENESS)

Physical; Untrained

'"Good!" said Legolas. "But my count is now two dozen. It has been knife-work up here"'
— The Two Towers

You are skilled at using your hands and feet in combat, making your body a weapon all its own. Skills within this group represent certain styles of weaponless fighting.

UNARMED COMBAT SKILLS

BRAWLING: You are handy at fighting in the bare-knuckle style favoured on battlefields and the roughest inns of the largest cities.

WRESTLING: You are skilled at wrestling your foe to the ground.

TEST: Make a test with Unarmed Combat to hit a target in hand-to-hand combat. The base TN is the target's Defence. See Chapter Nine for details on dodging, manoeuvres, modifiers, and damage. The greater your degree of success, the worse the wound you inflict on your foe.

Most Unarmed Combat tests depend on Nimbleness, for you must be deft and accurate to hit an enemy. But under certain circumstances, the Narrator may allow you to use Strength instead.

SPECIAL: At skill ranks 6, 9, and 12, you can select *one* of the unarmed combat manoeuvres listed on page 226, and receive a +1 bonus when you use it. You can select the same manoeuvre repeatedly to get a greater bonus. The grab and trip manoeuvres are appropriate for Wrestling, while the punch/kick and trip manoeuvres are appropriate for Brawling.

ACTION TIME: 1 action.

EXTENDED TEST: N/A.

WEATHER-SENSE (PERCEPTION)

Physical; Trained

'Gandalf snuffed the air and looked back. "Winter deepens behind us," he said quietly to Aragorn.'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

You can read the weather, determining what turns it may take or how much time will pass before a storm arrives.

SAMPLE SPECIALTIES: None.

TEST: Weather-sense requires a standard test with a difficulty based on how far in advance you want to gauge the weather. The greater the degree of success, the more certain you are about what course the weather will take. Weather-sense is **never** foolproof, though, especially when the Dark Lord himself can alter weather in need.

Simple (TN 5): Determining what the weather will be like in one hour.

Routine (TN 10): Determining what the weather will be like later today or tomorrow.

Challenging (TN 15): Determining what the weather will be like in 2–3 days.

Difficult (TN 20): Determining what the weather will be like in 4–5 days.

Virtually Impossible (TN 25): Determining what the weather will be like 6 or more days away.

AFFINITY: Observe provides an affinity bonus.

SPECIAL: At rank 9 and above, the character's sensitivity to wind and weather becomes so great that at times the air 'brings messages' to him. With a TN 20 test, he can gather rough information, such as the movements of armies or fleets, through Weather-sense. The Narrator determines when this applies and what the character learns.

ACTION TIME: 1 minute per category of difficulty: 1 minute for a Simple task, 2 minutes for a Routine task, and so forth.

EXTENDED TEST: N/A

Chapter Six

STERN MEN AND RESOLUTE

> *"'You are a stern man and resolute," she said; "and thus do men win renown."'*
>
> *— Éowyn, The Return of the King*

In addition to their skills and order abilities, *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* characters, being heroes—and sometimes the subjects of prophecy or foretellings—possess certain qualities or abilities that set them apart from ordinary folk. These are referred to as *traits.*

* * *

Traits come in two types: *edge* (which are beneficial or useful) and *flaw* (which hinder the character or complicate his life). That's right: Even the truest heroes have flaws. In fact, one of the things that makes a person a hero is his ability to overcome his own problems, inadequacies, and difficulties.

Unlike skills, traits affect characters all the time and do not require any rolls to activate or use—most of the time, anyway. In game terms, many of them apply modifiers to certain skills, but that's just the way the rules represent how a particular trait—such as being valorous, hardy, or arrogant—affects the character.

A lot of traits—such as Curious, Resolute, and Valorous—represent personality traits that your character possesses. You should remember them during the game and roleplay them properly. A Curious character should sometimes poke his nose in where it doesn't belong, and a Stern character should be serious most of the time. If you roleplay your traits well, your Narrator may grant you extra bonuses or experience points. On the other hand, if you don't roleplay them at all, she may deny you the use of these traits.

Traits

TABLE 6.1: MASTER TRAITS LIST

EDGES	REQUISITE	IMPROVE?
Accurate	Ranged Combat 4+	N
Ally	—	N
Ambidextrous	Nimbleness 6+	N
Armour of Heroes	—	N
Bold	Bearing 6+	N
Charmed Life	—	N
Command	Special	Y
Craftmaster	—	N
Curious	Wits 6+	N
Dodge	—	N
Doughty	Strength 9+	N
Elf-friend	—	N
Eloquent	—	N
Fair	Bearing 6+	N
Faithful	—	Y
Favour of Fortune	—	Y
Fell-handed	Armed Combat 6+	Y
Foresighted	Wits 12+, Wisdom +5+	N
Friends	—	Y
Furtive	—	N
Gift of Tongues	—	N
Hammerhand	Strength 8+	N
Hardy	Vitality 6+	N
Healing Hands	—	N
Hoard	—	Y
Honey-tongued	—	Y
Honour's Insight	—	Y
Incorruptible	—	Y
Indomitable	—	Y
Keen-eared	—	N
Keen-eyed	—	N
Keen-nosed	—	Y
Lion-hearted	—	N
Night-eyed	—	Y
Quick-draw	Nimbleness 6+, Armed/Ranged Combat 1+	Y
Rank	Special	Y
Resolute	—	Y
Stern	—	Y

EDGE/FLAW	REQUISITE	IMPROVE?
Strong-willed	—	Y
Swift Recovery	Vitality 9+	N
Tireless	—	Y
Travel-sense	—	N
Two-handed Fighting	Nimbleness 6+	N
Valiant	Bearing 9+	N
Valour	—	Y
Wakefulness	Vitality 6+	N
Warrior's Heart	—	Y
Warwise	—	Y
Wary	—	N
Weapon Mastery	Armed Combat 4+	N
Wise	—	Y
Woodcrafty	—	Y
FLAWS		
Arrogant	—	N
Battle-fury	—	Y
Code of Honour	—	N
Craven	—	N
Crippling Wound	—	N
Dark Secret	—	N
Dullard	—	N
Dull-eared	—	N
Dull-eyed	—	N
Duty	—	N
Enemy	—	Y
Fealty	—	N
Fey	—	N
Grasping	—	N
Hatred	—	N
Oath	—	N
Proud	—	N
Reckless	—	N
Rival	—	Y
Slow Recovery	—	N
Stiff-necked	—	N
Weak	—	N
Weak-willed	—	N

Edges

Accurate

‘“That was a mighty shot in the dark,
my friend!”’
— Gimli, The Fellowship of the Ring

Sharp-eyed and swift-handed, you can shoot targets others could never hit. Be it a low-flying hell-hawk or a *mûmak*'s eye, your arrow or javelin can strike it while other shots go astray.

Requisite: Ranged Combat +4.

Effect: Select one weapon you already have as a Ranged Weapon specialty. You receive a +3 test result bonus when using this kind of weapon.

Ally

‘“The Elvenking is my friend,
and he has succoured the people of
the Lake in their need, though they
had no claim but friendship on him.”’
— Bard, The Hobbit

A person great and powerful is known to you and considers you a boon companion—or at least worthy of respect. If you seek his aid, he will give it to you if he is able.

Effect: You must speak with your Narrator and together decide who your Ally is. He could be someone known across all of Middle-earth (Elrond) or a person of lesser import (a chieftain of a tribe or people), but he must be able to aid you, either with counsel or deeds. When you seek his help by making social tests, he is always friendly (+5 test result bonus) to you. But you must take care not to press him too closely or too often, lest he find himself unable or unwilling to help you. Nor should you ask for what you know he cannot provide. Elrond, for instance, cannot give you an army of Elven warriors, no matter how highly he regards you.

Because your Ally is a person with his own hopes and fears, you cannot seek his assistance through dice rolls alone. You must talk with him, taking account of his whims and fancies, justifying your requests with kindly and persuasive words. At times, it may be that he will seek your aid as well, asking a boon of you in return for favours past.

Ambidextrous

‘“But this time, misled by spite,
he had made the mistake of speaking
and gloating before he had both
hands on his victim's neck.”’
— Gandalf, The Hobbit

Most folk have one hand they favour over the other, but not you. You can use either hand with equal ease.

Requisite: Nimbleness 6+.

Effect: You suffer only a –4 test result penalty for using your off hand, rather than the usual –8. You still incur multiple action penalties (page 216) when appropriate.

Improvement: For one additional pick, you eliminate the off-hand penalty entirely.

Armour of Heroes

‘It was believed that if he bore no weapon
no weapon would bite on him.’
— The Return of the King

Forthright, great-hearted, and valorous, you are a true hero, and fate smiles kindly upon true heroes. Even when circumstance or necessity force you to go into peril unclad in armour, the subtle magic of Middle-earth protects you.

Effect: When you wear no armour, you are considered to have the equivalent of 2 points of armour. If you don a mail-shirt or other armour, you lose this benefit, though you can use a shield and retain the protection of Armour of Heroes.

Bold

‘“He is bold, more bold than many
deem... [and] yet a man of hardihood
and swift judgement in the field.
But such is Faramir.”’
— Beregond, The Return of the King

Forthright and determined, you press on when others shrink from the rigours of the task.

Requisite: Bearing 6+.

Effect: When you spend a point of Courage on a physical test, you receive +5 to your test result, instead of the usual +3.

Charmed Life

‘“The road may pass, but they shall not!
Not while Faramir is Captain.”’
— Mablung, The Two Towers

Fate smiles kindly on you, preserving your life when need or your own folly imperils it.

Effect: Once per game session, when you suffer injury sufficient to decrease your Wound Level, you may make a TN 10 Vitality test. If you succeed, you lose no Wound Levels. Instead, you retain a single Health point in your current level, no matter how many levels you would have lost. If you fail, you remain as injured as before.

IMPROVEMENT: You may select this edge a second time. Doing so reduces the TN for the Vitality test to 5.

COMMAND

> *'[Faramir] was a captain that men would follow, that he would follow, even under the shadow of the black wings.'*
> *— The Return of the King*

You have the captaincy or authority over a force of men—perhaps an army or ship.

REQUISITE: Through kind chance or the choice of wise men, leadership often comes to those both deserving and capable, but most who take up the mantle of command have rank in accord with their power. Unless the Narrator makes special provision, a character cannot make picks in Command exceeding his picks in Rank. Thus, to have Command 3, a character must likewise have Rank 3 or higher.

EFFECT: You are the rightful captain of a group of up to 150 men, such as the Rangers of the North or a shipfull of bold mariners.

IMPROVEMENT: The more picks you devote to this edge, the larger the force you command:

COMMAND 2: 151–1,000 men (the force of knights Prince Imrahil leads to the defence of Minas Tirith; Faramir's Rangers of Ithilien).

COMMAND 3: 1,001–5,000 men (the Riders led by Elfhelm to assault the Enemy in Anórien after the Battle of the Pelennor Fields).

COMMAND 4: Over 5,000 men (King Théoden's authority over the Riders of Rohan).

CRAFTMASTER

> *'[Sauron] was not yet evil to behold, and they received his aid and grew mighty in craft, whereas he learned all their secrets and betrayed them...'*
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

Your hands have marvellous skill in the arts of making, and your mind has an unbounded ability to conceive of new things for your hands to create.

EFFECT: You receive a +2 bonus to all Craft, Smithcraft, and Stonecraft tests.

CURIOUS

> *'Pippin felt curiously attracted by the well. While the others were...making beds against the walls of the chamber...he crept to the edge and peered over.'*
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

The unknown and the hidden lure you like a moth to the flame. You must find out what the locked chest holds and the shut door conceals. You can't help but investigate every dark corner and forbidden room.

REQUISITE: Wits 6+.

EFFECT: When you spend a point of Courage in a test with any Lore skill or with Search, you gain a +5 bonus, rather than the standard +3. But there is oft a price to pay for satisfying one's curiosity.

DODGE

> *'Frodo dodged aside and again put the stone between them...trembling he pulled out the Ring upon its chain and quickly slipped it on his finger...'*
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

Through hard experience of pain—or a desire to preserve your own skin whole and unharmed—you have developed a knack for avoiding peril and moving quickly in face of immediate danger.

REQUISITE: Nimbleness 9+.

EFFECT: You gain a +3 bonus to Swiftness tests for dodge actions.

DOUGHTY

' "But happily your Caradhras has forgotten you have Men with you . . . [a]nd doughty Men, too, if I may say it[.]" '
— Boromir, The Fellowship of the Ring

Your brawny thews and mighty frame give you capacities of strength beyond those of normal men.

REQUISITE: Strength 9+.

EFFECT: You receive a +1 bonus to Strength tests and tests with Strength-based skills.

ELF-FRIEND

' "I name you elf-friend and blessed." '
— Thranduil, The Hobbit

The Elves have named you their friend, one who has done them great service and is entitled to call upon them at need.

REQUISITE: You must have done something to earn the favour of the Elves, be it fighting on their behalf, performing a task for them that entailed great danger, or saving Elven lives at the risk of your own.

EFFECT: You receive +2 Renown when Elves determine whether they know of you, and a +1 test result bonus for all friendly uses of social skills with Elves.

This privilege comes with responsibilities. At times, the Elves may seek your aid, and refusal to help them could lead them to revoke your status as Elf-friend. They may do likewise if you abuse their friendship by seeking favours from them too often. You need an Elven Ally for such uses.

The Narrator may, at her choice, allow you to take this edge—properly renamed—as a reflection of a special friendship between you and some other people, such as the Dwarves or the Rohirrim.

ELOQUENT

' "I believe you speak more wisely than any of us, Sam[.]" '
— Aragorn, The Fellowship of the Ring

You speak well, with force or sweetness as the occasion demands, winning others to your side with bold speech.

EFFECT: You receive a +2 bonus when making Debate or Persuade tests.

FAIR

Such loveliness in living thing
Frodo had never seen before
or imagined in his mind[.]'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

You are wondrous fair to look upon. You win the hearts of all whose gaze comes to rest upon your countenance.

REQUISITE: Bearing 6+.

EFFECT: You receive a +4 bonus to Persuade (Charm) tests and—at the Narrator's discretion—to appropriate Inspire tests.

FAITHFUL

'In that hour it was the love of his master that helped most to hold him firm[.]'
— The Return of the King

You possess great devotion to and love for a person, group, or realm, and that inspires you to fight the harder and risk greater dangers to preserve it and keep it safe.

EFFECT: You select a person (Frodo, Faramir, Théoden, your beloved), a group (the Wise, the Shadow, the Rangers, your children), or a realm (Gondor, Rohan). When fighting on behalf of that which you hold dear, you receive a +1 test result bonus for parrying, blocking, and otherwise defending against direct assaults upon it, and for attacking foes who directly threaten it. (The Narrator determines whether you receive the bonus in any given situation.) You also receive bonuses for resisting fear in these situations (see page 233).

However, your loyalty to and desire to protect that to which you are Faithful may tempt you to actions you would otherwise avoid. When confronted by possible Corruption related to defending the object of your faithfulness ('If I put on the Ring, I can save Mr. Frodo from the Orcs!'), you suffer a –1 Willpower test result penalty to resist the Corruption.

IMPROVEMENT: You may select this edge a multiple times. Each additional pick garners you increased bonuses to resist fear (see page 233). However, each additional pick also increases the Willpower test result penalty to resist Corruption by –1.

FAVOUR OF FORTUNE

'In the end he made as good a guess as he could at the direction from which the cries for help had come in the night—and by luck he guessed more or less right[.]'

— The Hobbit

Fate smiles upon you, and fortune follows you wherever you go.

EFFECT: Once per game session, you may re-roll one roll of any sort. You may choose whichever result pleases you the most.

IMPROVEMENT: You may pick this edge multiple times, with each additional pick gaining you an additional re-roll per game session.

FELL-HANDED

' "Though I doubt not that these Rohirrim are fell-handed when they come to it." '

— Gimli, The Two Towers

You are a fearsome warrior whose hands and heart are filled with death for the foes you hate the most.

REQUISITE: Armed Combat 6+.

EFFECT: You receive a +1 test result bonus to hit foes belonging to a limited group (Uruks but not all Orcs, knights or Men of Gondor but not all Men, Grey Elves but not all Elves, and so on).

IMPROVEMENT: An additional pick expands your group of foes to a broad group (all Orcs, all Men, all Elves, and so on). A third pick expands this to all foes. You can also devote extra picks to improving the bonus. Each additional *two* picks increase the bonus by +1 (maximum of +3).

FORESIGHTED

' "That is the business of Wizards: Wizards are always troubled about the future." '

— Treebeard, The Two Towers

You have premonitions of future days, seeing dimly something of what is to come. Your control over this power may be little or great, and your foresight of the future somewhat clearer at times, but your prophetic insight is never a sure thing, or easily understood.

REQUISITES: Wits 12+, Wisdom +5 or greater.

EFFECTS: Once per game session, a character with this ability may ask to foretell the future. He makes a Wits test at TN 12. If he succeeds, he receives a brief vision of events that may occur later in the episode. Usually this vision is couched in obscure terms, symbolism, and the like, making a precise interpretation of its meaning impossible. Thus, no guarantee exists that the doom he foretells will come to pass, since only with hindsight can he determine what his vision truly means.

The Narrator has total control over what characters can learn with this ability. In many cases foretelling provides flavour and atmosphere for the game but has little effect on the chronicle itself. For example, a character might foresee that another character's line will never fail. These prophecies, since they have little (if any) game effect, may be quite clear and precise. Sometimes, even foretellings that can directly affect the game—such as 'not by the hand of man will he be slain' or 'in your hour of greatest need, take the Paths of the Dead'—can be stated in relatively clear terms, particularly when the Narrator wishes to use them to guide the characters' actions. But in many cases, such as Faramir's dream, the story is best served by obscure or vague prophecies the characters must unravel, the outcome and counsel of which are unclear.

See page 165 for more information on fate and foretelling.

FRIENDS

'"If we do not find them soon, we shall be of no use to them, except to sit down beside them and show our friendship by starving together."'
— Gimli, The Two Towers

You know many people and can call upon them for information or for help in acquiring it.

EFFECT: You must define a place or group where you have friends, such as Bree, the Rangers, Minas Tirith, or the Wandering Companies. When you use Inquire to obtain information there, from that group, or in places that group frequents, you receive a +4 test result bonus. Friends provide no help beyond this though. They will not aid you with arms, money, or in any other way unless you also have an appropriate Ally—or the Narrator feels generous.

IMPROVEMENT: You may devote additional picks to this edge. Each pick increases the test result bonus by +2 (maximum of +8) or adds another group or place to your circle of Friends.

FURTIVE

'"Still, if I were overcome and all my trees destroyed, I would not come while I had one dark hole left to hide in."'
— Treebeard, The Two Towers

Wary and clever, you know well how to hide both yourself and small objects.

EFFECT: You receive a +1 test result bonus when using Conceal, Legerdemain, Stealth, and similar skills.

GIFT OF TONGUES

'"Be careful, friends!" cried Gildor laughing. "Speak no secrets! Here is a scholar in the Ancient Tongue."'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

You have a fine ear for languages and speak them with ease and fluency.

REQUISITE: You must know two or more Languages at rank 4 or higher, and at least one of them must be a non-native language for your race.

EFFECT: You receive a +3 bonus for tests with all Languages you know.

HAMMERHAND

'With that he smote Freca such a blow with his fist that he fell back stunned, and died soon after.'
— The Return of the King

While others must fight with weapons, you have strong, powerful fists that can inflict great injuries on others.

REQUISITE: Strength 8+.

EFFECT: You may double your Strength bonus when calculating damage inflicted in unarmed combat.

HARDY

'"And yet even I, Dwarf of many journeys, and not the least hardy of my folk, cannot run all the way to Isengard without pause[.]"'
— Gimli, The Two Towers

A hard life and perilous has inured you to pain, allowing you to withstand more than other folk.

REQUISITE: Vitality 6+.

EFFECT: Reduce all injury penalties you suffer by 2. For example, when Incapacitated, you perform tests at a −2 test result penalty instead of the usual −4.

HEALING HANDS

'"Now he is a marvel, the Lord Elfstone: not too soft in his speech, mind you, but he has a golden heart, as the saying is; and he has the healing hands."'
— Ioreth, The Return of the King

You possess the hands of a healer, a natural gift for the healing arts that often brings succour and comfort to the injured and the sick.

EFFECT: When you make a Healing test, you gain a +5 bonus. When you use this edge, you must make a Stamina test or lose one Weariness Level for every two Wound Levels your patient has lost. The TN for the test equals 8, +2 for every Wound Level the patient has lost. Thus, for instance, the TN to use Healing Hands on someone Near Death is 18.

HOARD

> *‘There beryl, and pearl, and opal pale,*
> *And metal wrought like fishes' mail,*
> *Buckler and corslet, axe and sword,*
> *And shining spears were laid in hoard.’*
> — *The Fellowship of the Ring*

You possess great stores of gold, silver, gems and other things of value.

EFFECT: You own wealth equal in value to 50 silver pennies, or Gondorian silver coins. However, this wealth often is not in the form of coins but rather in objects of great value, such as jewellery, golden cups, heirlooms, horses, or an inn. You must speak with your Narrator to determine the nature of your Hoard.

IMPROVEMENT: Additional picks increase the amount of wealth a character owns:

HOARD 2: 51–500 sp.
HOARD 3: 501–5,000 sp.
HOARD 4: 5,001–50,000 sp.
HOARD 5: 50,001–500,000 sp.

HONEY-TONGUED

> *‘“Have we ridden forth to victory, only*
> *to stand at last amazed by an old liar*
> *with honey on his forked tongue?”’*
> — *Éomer, The Two Towers*

Sweet-tongued and courteous, you can speak with kindness even when angered, winning favour with words.

EFFECT: You receive a +2 bonus to all social skills tests where pleasant speech is involved or might have an effect, such as most uses of Debate or Persuade, but not Intimidate.

IMPROVEMENT: You may devote additional picks to this edge. Each pick increases the test result bonus by +2 (maximum of +8).

HONOUR'S INSIGHT

> *‘“Yet you speak the truth, that is plain:*
> *the Men of the Mark do not lie, and*
> *therefore they are not easily deceived.”’*
> — *Éomer, The Two Towers*

Your honour and honesty let you see into the hearts and minds of others, making it difficult for them to deceive you.

EFFECT: You receive a +2 bonus for Wisdom or Insight tests to prevent others from tricking or deceiving you with, say, Persuade (Fast Talk).

IMPROVEMENT: You may devote additional picks to this edge. Each pick increases the test result bonus by +2 (maximum of +8).

INCORRUPTIBLE

> *‘“I would not take this thing,*
> *if it lay by the highway. Not were*
> *Minas Tirith falling in ruin and*
> *I alone could save her...”’*
> — *Faramir, The Two Towers*

Pure of heart and motive, you can well resist temptation.

EFFECT: You receive a +4 bonus to Willpower tests to resist Corruption.

IMPROVEMENT: You may devote additional picks to this edge. Each pick increases the test result bonus by +2 (maximum of +8).

INDOMITABLE

> *‘Of all the slaves of the Dark Lord,*
> *only the Nazgûl could have warned*
> *him of the perils that creep...into the*
> *very heart of his guarded realm.’*
> — *The Return of the King*

You possess great strength of will and can more easily resist attempts to dominate or command you.

EFFECT: You receive a +4 bonus to Willpower tests to resist torture, interrogation, domination, and similar influence.

IMPROVEMENT: Yes. Each additional pick increases the test result bonus by +2 (maximum of +8).

KEEN-EARED

'Far within [Sam] could hear faintly
the voices of orcs clamouring,
but soon they stopped or passed
out of hearing, and all was still.'
— The Return of the King

Not even the softest footfall or quietest whisper escapes your hearing.

REQUISITE: Perception 6+.

EFFECT: You receive a +2 bonus for Observe (Listen) tests.

KEEN-EYED

' "Well, it is the first time that even
a mouse has crept along carefully
and quietly under my very nose
and not been spotted..." '
— Balin, The Hobbit

You have sharp eyes that can pierce distance and gloom to see truly.

REQUISITE: Perception 6+

EFFECT: You receive a +2 bonus for Observe (Spot) tests.

KEEN-NOSED

'Wolves of that sort smell keener than
goblins, and do not need to see to
catch you!'
— The Hobbit

Others may have only eyes and ears to rely upon, but you possess so keen a sense of smell that you can follow beasts or men by scent alone.

REQUISITE: Perception 6+.

EFFECT: You receive a +2 bonus for Observe (Smell) tests. Additionally, if you have Track (Scent), the bonus applies to it as well.

IMPROVEMENT: You may devote additional picks to this edge. Each pick increases the test result bonus for Track (but not Observe) by +2 (maximum of +8).

LION-HEARTED

Your courage shines through in battle, protecting you from injury.

EFFECT: You may expend Courage to reduce or avoid the effects of injury. This Courage must be spent immediately after the character suffers a wound. It doesn't provide instant healing but rather reflects the fact that the character dodged, blocked, or otherwise avoided the attack at the last minute. For each point of Courage spent, the character reduces the damage inflicted by a number of wound points equal to 1d6 plus his Vitality modifier (minimum of 2). The character can entirely negate incoming damage, but not reduce damage sustained from previous injuries.

NIGHT-EYED

' "There's only one thing those maggots can
do: they can see like gimlets in the dark." '
— Uglúk, The Two Towers

While the darkness blinds others, you retain the ability to see.

EFFECT: You reduce the penalties for seeing in the dark by 2. For example, in full darkness, you suffer only a −3 test result penalty, not the usual −5.

IMPROVEMENT: For an additional pick, you decrease darkness penalties by 5.

QUICK-DRAW

' "He stands not alone," said Legolas, bend-
ing his bow and fitting an arrow with
hands that moved quicker than sight." '
— The Two Towers

Your life of battle and wariness has taught you how to ready your weapon with blinding speed.

REQUISITES: Nimbleness 6+, at least one level with Armed Combat or Ranged Combat.

EFFECT: You can draw or ready any personal weapon as a free action. If you attempt to draw your weapon before another person who also has Quick-draw, whoever has the most picks in the edge wins the contest. If both have the same number of picks, use an opposed Swiftness test to determine who wins.

IMPROVEMENT: Additional picks in Quick-draw simply make you faster than others with this edge (see above).

RANK

'"A king will have his way in his own hall, be it folly or wisdom."'
— Gandalf, The Two Towers

You possess authority, perhaps even rulership, over some realm or body of men.

REQUISITE: Some positions require that you come from a particular people, belong to a particular family or group, or be descended from a certain ancestor. Théoden, as King of Rohan, must belong to the House of Eorl, and Elessar can only become King of Gondor and Arnor because of his status as the Heir of Isildur. Other ranks merely require a higher power appoint you to them or that you attain them through your own strength and force of personality. Aragorn earned rank in the militaries of Gondor and Rohan through his skill and bearing, Orc-chieftains achieve power by slaying their rivals and bullying their underlings, and Elrond has authority over the Elves due to their respect for his wisdom and experience.

EFFECT/IMPROVEMENT: Rank has no effect on its own, but it acts as a requisite for certain special abilities of the Noble order and for the Command edge (see above). However, it may have substantial story effects, in that rank confers many privileges, such as obedience and deference from NPCs. It does not grant the character military power (that requires Command) or wealth (that requires Hoard).

The Rank Table indicates the number of picks required for specific titles.

TABLE 6.2: RANK

PICKS	NOBILITY/LEADERSHIP
1	Lord (minor), Thane of the Shire, Orc tribal chieftain, member of the local gentry
2	Lord (major)
3	Prince, Marshal of the Riddermark
4	King

RESOLUTE

'"None can force an entrance against determined men. They may hold out for long."'
— Théoden, The Two Towers

Strong-willed and determined, you cannot be swayed from your chosen path, either by harsh action or wily counsel.

EFFECT: You receive a +1 bonus to Stamina and Willpower tests.

IMPROVEMENT: You may devote additional picks to this edge. Each pick increases the test result bonus by +1 (maximum of +4).

STERN

'Frodo drew himself up, and again Sam was startled by his words and his stern voice. "On the Precious? How dare you?" he said.'
— Frodo to Gollum, The Two Towers

Your severe and exacting demeanour often makes others uneasy and thus the more ready to bow before your will.

EFFECT: You receive a +2 bonus to Debate and Intimidate tests in which your sternness might help you cow others. However, you may have difficulty putting others at ease. The Narrator may impose a −1 test result penalty on your uses of other social skills.

IMPROVEMENT: You may devote additional picks to this edge. Each pick increases the test result bonus by +2 (maximum of +8).

STRONG-WILLED

‘“[Lord Denethor] is strong-willed and proud, but old; and his mood has been strange since his son was stricken down.”’
— Prince Imrahil, The Two Towers

You have a will of adamant, and you refuse to give in to the blandishments or threats of others.

EFFECT: You receive a +2 bonus to Willpower tests.

IMPROVEMENT: You may devote additional picks to this edge. Each pick increases the test result bonus by +2 (maximum of +8).

SWIFT RECOVERY

‘“I have known strong warriors of the Big People who would quickly have been overcome by that splinter, which you bore for seventeen days.”’
— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

Through strength of body and will, you heal quickly, shrugging off the effects of injury while others lie nursing their wounds.

REQUISITE: Vitality 9+

EFFECT: When allowed to heal naturally, you heal twice as fast as others, recovering 2 points of Health while they recover but 1.

TIRELESS

‘“The horses of the Nine cannot vie with him; tireless, swift as the flowing wind. Shadowfax they called him.”’
— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

You possess unflagging endurance and can push yourself past the point where others would collapse from exhaustion.

EFFECT: You receive a +4 bonus to Stamina tests to resist Weariness.

IMPROVEMENT: You may devote additional picks to this edge. Each pick increases the test result bonus by +2 (maximum of +8).

TRAVEL-SENSE

‘“I need no map,” said Gimli, who had come up with Legolas, and was gazing out before him with a strange light in his deep eyes.’
— The Fellowship of the Ring

You have spent years travelling the Wilds and have learned many roads and many ways to tell where you are. You can always remember how to return to or travel through a place you have been.

EFFECT: You never get lost travelling to or through any place you have been to, nor do you ever lose the ability to determine north, south, east, and west. This edge functions automatically, requiring no tests.

TWO-HANDED FIGHTING

You can fight with a weapon in either hand, and you can make one additional attack each round with the extra weapon.

REQUISITE: Nimbleness 6+

EFFECT: When attacking with a weapon in either hand, you gain an extra combat action without suffering the standard penalty for multiple actions. You still suffer the –8 penalty for attacking with your off hand however. You cannot use a shield when fighting with two weapons.

VALIANT

‘“Therefore Boromir will also be in the Company. He is a valiant man.”’
— Aragorn, The Fellowship of the Ring

The fires of true courage and noble determination burn within your breast. When only heroic action can win through to victory, you can succeed where others fail.

REQUISITE: Bearing 9+.

EFFECT: Make a TN 10 Bearing test. You may only roll once, unless you use Favour of Fortune to reroll. If you succeed, you receive +2 Courage to spend on any one action in that scene. You may only spend it on a truly heroic action, typically one on which victory or defeat hinges, not simply to look good. The Narrator determines if it's proper for you to use your bonus Courage on a particular test. If you do not use it, the bonus Courage vanishes when the scene ends.

You may only use Valiant once per game session, unless the Narrator allows further use.

VALOUR

> *'"And as for valour,*
> *that cannot be computed by stature."'*
> *— Gandalf, The Return of the King*

Stout-hearted and courageous, possessed of a nobility and virtue that not even the Nazgûl can entirely overcome, you withstand terror better than most men.

EFFECT: You receive a +4 bonus to Willpower tests for the purposes of resisting fear.

IMPROVEMENT: You may devote additional picks to this edge. Each pick increases the test result bonus by +2 (maximum of +8).

WAKEFULNESS

> *'Sam found it difficult to do more than doze, even when Gollum was plainly fast asleep, whiffling and twitching in his secret dreams.'*
> *— The Two Towers*

Your strength of body and will allows you to remain awake without ill effect far longer than most people.

REQUISITE: Vitality 6+.

EFFECT: Whereas most characters must sleep some each day, a character with this edge can remain awake a number of nights in a row equal to his Stamina. Though awake, he can still recover lost Weariness Levels by resting. However, the character still loses one Weariness Level per day he goes without sleep, and he may not recover these lost levels until he sleeps.

WARRIOR'S HEART

> *'Venerable [Elrond] seemed as a king crowned with many winters, and yet hale as a tried warrior in the fullness of his strength.'*
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

The cry of battle is a song to your heart, granting you the power to fight on when weariness has driven other warriors from the field.

EFFECT: You receive a +4 bonus to Stamina tests to resist Weariness related to battle.

IMPROVEMENT: You may devote additional picks to this edge. Each pick increases the test result bonus by +2 (maximum of +8).

WARWISE

> *'"But I do not seek allies in war. The might of Elrond is in wisdom not in weapons, it is said."'*
> *— Boromir, The Fellowship of the Ring*

Through experience or natural skill, you possess a gift for matters of tactics and battle.

EFFECT: You receive a +1 test result bonus with Siegecraft and all combat skills: Armed Combat, Ranged Combat, and Unarmed Combat.

IMPROVEMENT: You may devote additional picks to this edge. Each pick increases the test result bonus by +1 (maximum of +3).

WARY

> *'If he was still following, he was very wary and cunning.'*
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

Naturally cautious and alert, you can react to peril more swiftly than others.

EFFECT: You receive a +3 bonus to Swiftness tests to determine initiative.

WEAPON MASTERY

'The armed men that stood near clashed their weapons, crying: "The Lord of the Mark will ride!"'
— The Two Towers

Your skill with blade and spear is legend. Allies look on you with awe, and foes regard you with fear.

REQUISITE: Armed Combat +4.

EFFECT: Select one weapon from your Armed Combat specialties. You receive a +3 bonus to Armed Combat tests when using this weapon.

WISE

'"Here I now name my guest, Gandalf Greyhame, wisest of counsellors[.]"'
— Théoden, The Two Towers

You are accounted among the wise, one whose sage counsel others seek.

EFFECT: You receive a +1 bonus with all Lore skills and Wisdom tests.

IMPROVEMENT: You may devote additional picks to this edge. Each pick increases the test result bonus by +1 (maximum of +4).

WOODCRAFTY

'But at any rate hobbits can move quietly in woods, absolutely quietly.'
— The Hobbit

You possess matchless skill in the wild and can follow tracks or hide where others cannot.

EFFECT: You receive a +1 bonus with all wilderness-based skills—like Survival, Track, and Weather Sense—and with Stealth when used to hide in or move silently through natural areas.

IMPROVEMENT: You may devote additional picks to this edge. Each pick increases the test result bonus by +1 (maximum of +4).

FLAWS

Flaws are negative traits: hindrances, complications, problems, and threats that affect a character, often making it more difficult for him to accomplish his objectives and achieve his goals. When planning chronicles, the Narrator should review each character's flaws and see how they might affect, or play a part in, the story she has in mind. This way she can better tailor the story to the characters.

ARROGANT

'"[W]anderers in the Riddermark would be wise to be less haughty in these days of doubt."'
— Jomer, The Two Towers

Scornful of those beneath you or of peoples other than your own, you have trouble understanding them or speaking kindly with them.

EFFECT: You cannot spend Courage points on tests with social skills.

BATTLE-FURY

'For once more the lust of battle was on him; and he was still unscathed, and he was young, and he was king: the lord of a fell people.'
— The Return of the King

In war, a lust or fury for battle overcomes you. You cannot leave the field of combat until no foe remains able to oppose you.

EFFECT: When you fight, you cannot withdraw or surrender while any foeman remains standing, even if you have suffered grievous wounds or other matters demand your attention. Your battle-fury keeps you in the fray unless you spend a Courage point.

IMPROVEMENT: In some, the fires of fury burn the hotter, and they may take this flaw more than once:

BATTLE-FURY 2: Not only can you not leave a battle until all enemies are beaten, you cannot refrain from slaying defeated enemies unless you spend a Courage point.

BATTLE-FURY 3: In battle, you lose all control of yourself and continue attacking everyone, even your comrades and allies, until no one remains able to fight—or you spend a Courage point.

CODE OF HONOUR

' "Go!" said Aragorn. "But keep what honour you may, and do not run!" '
— The Return of the King

You live your life by a moral code, caring little for the harm you may suffer because of it for the satisfaction and honour it brings you.

EFFECT: You must choose a standard by which to live your life, and the Narrator must approve it. For example, you might refuse to tell falsehoods, refuse to attack foes unawares, refuse to obey the commands of any man who has not proven himself your better, or swear to enjoy the company of no women but your true love. If you violate your code, even without meaning to, other characters who make Renown tests to determine if they know who you are receive a +2 test result bonus, and they automatically know of the violation if they succeed.

CRAVEN

' "It is true that we are not yet at open war with the Black Land, and there are some, close to the king's ear, that speak craven counsels..." '
— Jomer, The Two Towers

You do not possess the heart of a warrior. Fear of battle and of other perils overwhelms you, unmanning you at times when bravery is needed.

EFFECT: When confronted by any danger, such as battle, or threats (any use of Intimidate achieving a test result of 10 or higher), you must flee, give in to the threat, or react in another proper manner, unless you spend a point of Courage.

CRIPPLING WOUND

'He had one eye blinded beyond cure, and he was halt with a leg-wound; but he said, "Good! We have the victory. Khazad-dûm is ours!" '
— The Return of the King

You suffered a grievous injury in battle that crippled you, leaving you less able to fight and adventure than before.

EFFECT: You must speak with your Narrator and determine what wound you suffered and its effects. Perhaps you were lamed by a leg-wound (reduce all movement rates and paces by half), or crippled by an arm-wound (randomly select one arm, and lose all use of it), or blinded in one eye (suffer a –5 test result penalty for all ranged attacks).

DARK SECRET

' "But you, Gandalf! For you at least I am grieved, feeling for your shame. How comes it that you can endure such company?" '
— Saruman, The Two Towers

Your heart holds some dread secret, one so terrible it would shame you if others were to learn of it.

EFFECT: Speak with your Narrator and determine what type of secret you have. It must be something that would harm you if revealed, but not something so unheroic that it prevents you from joining your comrades on noble adventures. For example, Saruman's treachery was a Dark Secret he carried for many long years, but no true hero could have such a secret, since it means he's not a hero at all. Proper Dark Secrets for heroes include having once shown cowardice, carrying on a love affair with another man's wife, or falsely claiming high ancestry.

When you meet one who knows your Dark Secret, you suffer a –10 penalty on all social skill tests—and any other tests the Narrator judges would be affected.

DULLARD

' "You have become a fool, Saruman, and yet pitiable." '
— Gandalf, The Two Towers

Your mind does not turn easily to matters of study or lore, and you have little concern for them.

EFFECT: When you spend Courage on a test with any Lore skill, you receive only a +2 bonus, rather than the usual +3.

DULL-EARED

' "I've heard nothing, and seen nothing, for two nights now." '
— Frodo, The Two Towers

Your hearing is poor. Others often must speak loudly to ensure that you hear their words.

EFFECT: You suffer a –2 penalty to Observe (Hear) tests.

DULL-EYED

'He could see nothing but the wheeling stars, and away to his right vast shadows against the sky where the mountains of the South marched past.'
— The Return of the King

Your sight is poor. You have trouble seeing objects others perceive plainly.

EFFECT: You suffer a –2 penalty to Observe (Spot) tests.

DUTY

' "Farewell for this time!" he said. "I have duty now till sundown, as have all the others here, I think." '
— Beregond, The Return of the King

An obligation has been laid upon you, whether by a promise you made, the responsibilities you and your family possess from position or inheritance, or your own sense of honour. If you fail to fulfil your duty, others think less of you.

EFFECT: The effects of a Duty depend upon your obligation (which you must choose after speaking with your Narrator). A character known to have failed to fulfil his Duty usually suffers a –5 (or greater) test result penalty on all social Skill tests.

Nobles often have Duties relating to their position. A noble who shirks his Duty, whether one set down by the law or simply assumed due to long custom or the expectations of his people, loses any special abilities he has which require it, until he finds a way to make amends for his failure.

ENEMY

' "We must press our enemy, and longer wait for him on the move." '
— Aragorn, The Return of the King

Your heroic conduct and goals have earned you an enemy who grudges your achievements and would keep you from further success if he could. Be this foe one man or a small group of men, they are bound to stop at nothing to defeat you.

EFFECT: After speaking with your Narrator, you must choose a single person (Saruman, a Dunlending chieftain, and so on) or a small group (a tribe of Orcs, the Rangers of the North, and so on) to be your Enemy. Though he or they may not work against you in every adventure, your Enemy always bears you ill will and often finds ways to hinder you—or even to try to slay you.

Your Enemy's actions depend on the Narrator's plans. Typically when preparing an adventure, the Narrator rolls 1d6. If she rolls a 1, your Enemy becomes part of the story. This may mean he attacks you, but it could involve other ways of interfering with your plans, such as taking hostage your wife or child, or stealing the book of lore you need.

IMPROVEMENT: If you want to make a large or powerful group your Enemy—all Orcs, all servants of the Shadow—or if you want your Enemy to oppose you more frequently (on a 1–2 on 1d6), you receive two picks in compensation for this flaw, rather than the usual one.

FEALTY

' "Here I do swear fealty and service to Gondor, and to the Lord and Steward of the realm..." '
— Pippin, The Return of the King

You have sworn an oath of allegiance and obedience to a lord or ruler and must now comply with his commands and the other requirements of your oath. If you fail to keep faith in this matter, you suffer the full weight of your lord's displeasure, and other men scorn you.

EFFECT: By virtue of your oath, you must obey the lawful commands of your liege-lord, and he in turn must render to you the rewards and honours due one of your stature and service. If you break your oath, he can punish you as he sees fit, and you suffer a –10 penalty on all social skill tests with those who know of your faithlessness, until you find a way to repair your fault.

Usually, you may only swear Fealty to nobles one at a time. The Narrator may allow you to declare allegiance to other men, as she sees fit.

FEY

'[A]nd then he shivered, for it came suddenly to him that it was the face of one without hope who goes in search of death.'
— The Return of the King

Stricken with despair or hopelessness, you desire death, or at least do not seek to avoid it.

EFFECT: When you meet with any danger, be it a fearsome foe such as the Lord of the Nazgûl or a nigh-insurmountable obstacle like the passage of Moria, you must confront and chance it, unless you spend a point of Courage.

GRASPING

' "One who cannot cast away a treasure at need is in fetters." '
—Aragorn, The Two Towers

Avaricious and miserly, you desire gold and riches above all other things.

EFFECT: When wealth falls into your path, you must spend a Courage point to resist its lure. Otherwise, you must do whatever you can to obtain it.

HATRED

'Saruman rose to his feet,
and stared at Frodo. There was
a strange look in his eyes of mingled
wonder and respect and hatred.'
— The Return of the King

You feel loathing and spite for a person or people and cannot hide your scorn except with great effort.

EFFECT: You must select a person, group, or people whom you hate. The subject of your hate must be one with whom you might usually enjoy cordial—or at least neutral—relations. You cannot have a Hatred of any servants of the Shadow, for all Free Peoples hate the Shadow as it hates them. When you treat with the object of your hatred, you must spend a point of Courage, or else your dislike is plain and causes you to suffer a −10 test penalty for all social skill tests.

OATH

' "And if the West prove mightier
than thy Black Master, this curse
I lay upon thee and thy folk:
to never rest until your oath is fulfilled." '
— Isildur, The Return of the King

You have sworn a deep and powerful oath, one that binds you more strongly than the mightiest bands of steel. Should you break your pledge, a terrible doom will befall you.

EFFECT: Speak with your Narrator to determine the nature of the Oath you have sworn. She will remember it and find ways to make it part of your chronicle. When called upon to fulfil your oath, you must do so, no matter what it cost you. If you do not, the one to whom you swore can lay upon you a curse (see page 164). If he cannot or does not, the subtle power of fate punishes you in proper manner, even beyond the grave if need be. Only when you find a way to satisfy the terms of your vow, or one with the right to do so frees you of it, can you escape your doom and know peace.

PROUD

' "I was not sent to beg any boon,
but to seek only the meaning of a riddle." '
— Boromir, The Fellowship of the Ring

Headstrong and possessed of overweening pride, you do not suffer insults or taunts well and rarely accept any counsel but your own.

EFFECT: If someone mocks or insults you, even gently, you must spend a point of Courage or take offence. If you take offence, you must react in an appropriate manner, whether that be remembering the insult so you can redress it later, responding in kind, or attacking your tormentor. In like manner, if another taunts you with your lack of bravery or skill, you must spend a point of Courage or accept the challenge implied by the taunt, no matter how foolish or dangerous it may be. If you receive strong advice on a matter of import, you must spend a point of Courage or reject that counsel utterly, no matter how sound.

RECKLESS

> *'Then down [Smaug] swooped straight through the arrow-storm, reckless in his rage, taking no heed to turn his scaly sides toward his foes...'*
>
> *— The Hobbit*

You scorn to waste time and effort on subtle plans and preparations, preferring action, even hasty action, above all else.

EFFECT: If you engage in a physical test and you spend a point of Courage, you receive only a +2 bonus instead of the usual +3. If others try to dissuade you from your chosen course of action, they make any tests to do so with a –5 penalty.

RIVAL

> *'At the time many thought that Thorongil had departed before his rival became his master...'*
>
> *— The Return of the King*

For reasons deserved or undeserved—and perhaps even unknown to you—you have earned the rivalry of another person of station and power like unto yourself.

EFFECT: After speaking with your Narrator, you must choose a single person, at least your equal in power and prestige, as your Rival. He must be one with whom you might usually enjoy cordial—or at least neutral—relations, such as a servant of the same lord or a soldier in the same army. Though he may not work against you in every adventure, your Rival often seeks ways to hinder you and make you seem inferior to him. Though he does not desire to physically harm you or cause your death—if he did, he would be an Enemy instead—your Rival does his best to thwart your aims—insofar as they do not agree with his own—and humiliate you.

Your Rival's actions depend on the Narrator's plans. Typically, when preparing an adventure, the Narrator rolls 1d6. If she rolls a 1, your Rival becomes part of the story. He may seek to outdo you in a contest or feat of arms, woo your love away from you, obtain favours of your lord that would ordinarily go to you, or find like means of impeding or aggravating you.

IMPROVEMENT: If you want your Rival to harass you more frequently (on a 1–2 on 1d6), you receive two picks in compensation, rather than the usual one.

SLOW RECOVERY

> *'At the word hungry a greenish light was kindled in Gollum's pale eyes, and they seemed to protrude further than ever from his thin sickly face.'*
>
> *— The Two Towers*

Sickly, or perhaps simply weak in body or will, you heal slowly when injured or laid low by illness.

EFFECT: When allowed to heal naturally, you heal twice as slowly as others, recovering but 1 point of Health while they recover 2.

STIFF-NECKED

> *' "A plague on Dwarves and their stiff necks!" said Legolas.'*
>
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

Stubborn and prideful, you refuse to obey others when you find their commands insulting, or to change your mind once you have made your decision.

EFFECT: If you set your mind to a contrary course of suggested action, you must resist all attempts to sway your decision not to obey, unless you spend a point of Courage.

WEAK

> *'Howling with pain and fear but desperate the orc charged head-down at him.'*
>
> *— The Return of the King*

You have little tolerance for pain.

EFFECT: Increase all injury penalties you suffer by –2. For example, when Incapacitated, you suffer a –6 test result penalty, not the usual –4.

WEAK-WILLED

> *'His will was too weak and slow to restrain his hand. It dragged at the chain and clutched the Ring.'*
>
> *— The Return of the King*

You possess little will and often have difficulty resisting the blandishments or threats of others.

EFFECT: You suffer a –2 penalty to Willpower tests.

IMPROVEMENT: You may devote additional picks to this flaw. Each pick increases the test result penalty by –2 (maximum of –8).

Chapter Seven

WORDS OF POWER AND RUNES OF MIGHT

'"Don't shudder! If you will meddle in the affairs of Wizards, you must be prepared to think of such things."'
— Gandalf, The Two Towers

Magic suffuses Middle-earth. From the bottoms of the deepest pit of Sauron to the tops of the highest mountains of the Hithaeglir, it is an integral part of the land and the people, even if most folk never see a spell cast or a dragon in flight.

THE NATURE OF MAGIC IN MIDDLE-EARTH

Magic in Middle-earth has two aspects you must consider: the general manipulation of magic by characters (usually through casting spells) and the subtle magic found throughout the land.

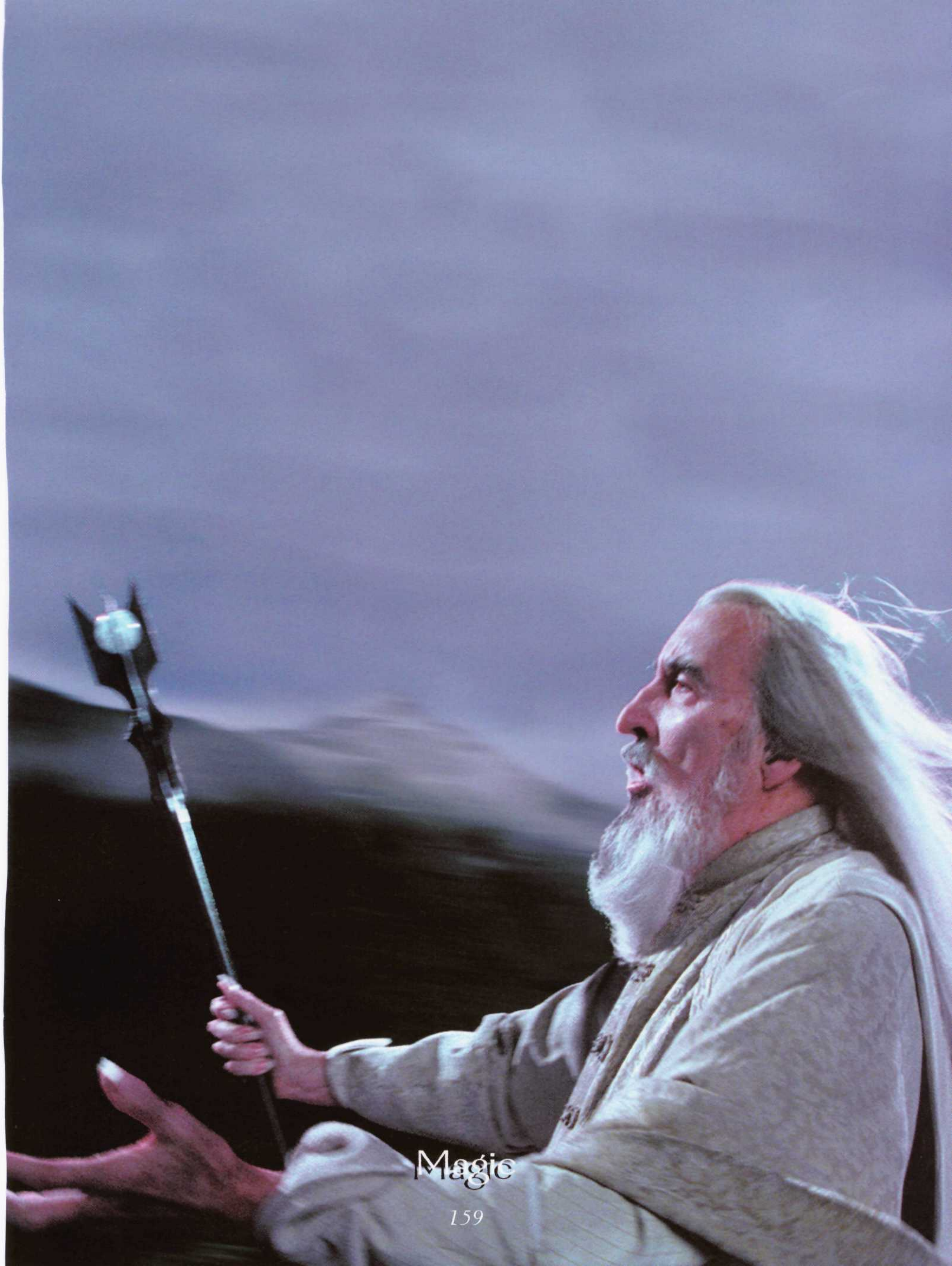
SPELLCASTING AND TYPES OF MAGIC

Broadly speaking, Middle-earth magic is divided into two types: wizardry and sorcery.

WIZARDRY

Most spells and magical powers used by characters are wizardry, the general term used in Middle-earth to describe such things. Although magicians and wizards are rare and often secretive, there exists in Middle-earth a robust tradition of magical practice. For some things, such as opening and locking doors, there are dozens of different spells, though some may apply in such limited conditions (they only work on one specific door, for instance) that they have little use for most characters.

All races—even Orcs—can learn to cast spells of wizardry, though not all of them necessarily take advantage



Magic

of this fact. For example, almost no records exist of any Hobbits having ever studied magic or cast spells, and Dwarves practice magic rarely, usually through their craftwork or by graving runes. Even when they use the same spells, each race works them differently. Elven magic is both powerful and refined, employing spells—often cast through song—or manifesting as special abilities. Orc-magic is harsh and crude, used mainly to harm and slay. The magic of Men can vary wildly from realm to realm—and even from magician to magician—depending upon the traditions studied and the lore available to the caster.

Different races may also perceive magic differently. To Elves, magic is so natural and so much a part of their being that they don't consider it unnatural or odd, like other races do. Men regard magic as something to study and learn, a body of lore open only to the truly wise and powerful. Dwarves' views seem to fall somewhere in between these extremes.

The most important thing to remember about spells and magic for your chronicle is that magic, as an inherent part of Middle-earth, is both defined by and reflects the flavour of the setting. In Middle-earth, magic spells tend to be low-powered and simple compared to spells in other fantasy settings and games. Magicians, even wizards, cannot fly, summon demons, walk through walls, or blast their foes with bolts of arcane energy. Even Gandalf, the most powerful wizard in the land during the War of the Ring, could not slay the Witch-king with a wave of his hand, toss balls of fire to destroy legions of Orcs, repair the gates of Minas Tirith with a spell, or instantly transport himself and Frodo to Orodruin. However, he and other spellcasters could open and lock doors, shatter objects, converse with beasts, and start fires. In Middle-earth, a land of subtle and flavourful magic, these abilities make spellcasters powerful and awe-inspiring—even if they don't allow them to effortlessly kill enemy after enemy.

SORCERY

'"It is perilous to study too deeply the arts of the Enemy, for good or for ill."'
— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

Sorcery is a dark and evil form of wizardry, a foul form of magic practiced primarily by the Enemy and his servants, such as the Mouth of Sauron and the Witch-king. It includes spells of torment, ruin, anguish, despair, and death. Its essence lies in the domination and subjugation of others, in terror, and in violence and harm. To some extent, any spell cast for evil purposes, even one of ordinary wizardry, can fall within the realm of sorcery in a philosophical sense. Sorcery provides greater power more quickly than normal wizardry does—and even some powers unavailable through regular wizardry—but at the cost of tainting the magician's very being. Only the

wicked, the foolish, and the power-hungry learn it. Wise folk and heroes avoid it at all costs.

Generally, player characters should not know any sorcery spells. It is not a form of magic for heroes to practice. For each spell of sorcery a character learns, he acquires one point of Corruption. This point is permanent and cannot be gotten rid of in any way. Additionally, each time a hero casts a sorcery spell, he must make a Willpower test against TN 15 or acquire another point of Corruption (see page 234).

Furthermore, any character who knows even a single spell of sorcery suffers a –6 penalty to the Stamina test to resist Weariness from casting any 'Secret Fire' spell (see below).

SPELL SPECIALTIES AND CASTING METHODS

> *'But, of course, Gandalf had made a special study of bewitchments of fire and lights[.]'*
>
> *— The Hobbit*

Some magicians and wizards devote special effort to studying some particular aspect of magic or a special way of casting spells. This makes it easier for them to cast spells of that type and to withstand the wearying effects of doing so. In game terms, they do this by taking the Spell Specialty, Wizard Spell Specialty, Spellcasting Method, or Wizard Spellcasting Method order abilities described in Chapter Four.

Spell Specialties

A specialty in a particular type of spell applies to any spell that fits within that category, however the character casts it. Possible categories include:

Air and Storm: Spells pertaining to weather, storms, clouds, fogs, and wind, such as *Fog-raising, Fog-weaving, Lightning,* and *Wind-Mastery.*

Beasts and Birds: Spells pertaining to animals, birds, and perhaps even plants, such as *Animal Messenger, Beast Speech,* and *Beast Summoning.*

Fire, Smoke, and Light: Spells pertaining to the various aspects of fire, such as *Blinding Flash, Burning Sparks, Create Light,* and *Kindle Fire.*

Secret Fire: Spells that manifest the power of goodness and freedom, the powers that the Wise serve, such as *Create Light, Flame of Anor, Healing-spell,* and *Resist Fear.*

Sorcery: Sauron's servants often specialize in the dark arts of magic, such as *Blast of Sorcery, Evoke Fear,* and *Ruin.*

Water: Spells pertaining to rivers, streams, and water in general, such as *Fog-raising, Fog-weaving,* and *Watershaping.*

Note that some spells fall into more than one category.

Spellcasting Methods

Most spells are cast in the standard fashion described under 'Casting Spells,' below. All spells can be cast in this manner unless otherwise noted. It is impossible to specialize in standard spellcasting. However, as indicated in the individual spell descriptions, some spells may be cast through runes or songs of power, and characters may take a Spellcasting Method or Wizard Spellcasting Method ability to use these methods.

Runes: A spellcasting method often used by Dwarves, employing runes involves drawing, etching, or engraving runic symbols of power onto or into an object the caster wishes to protect or use. Because of this requirement, characters cannot cast many spells—including most attack spells, such as *Lightning*—this way, as there would be nothing for the caster to write or grave the rune upon. Casting a spell this way requires much more time than normal, but the effects last longer than normal as well. The casting time (see page 171) is equal to one minute or double the listed casting time, whichever is longer. During that time, the spellcaster must write the runes on the affected object or thing. The duration of the spell increases by 50%.

Songs of Power: Elven spellcasters often favour this method, though others may use it as well. A song of power, while requiring more time to 'cast' (sing) than a normal spell, has greater power than ordinary wizardry. The casting time for spells that can be sung is equal to one minute or double the listed casting time, whichever is longer. The spell's damage or other quantifiable effects increase by 50%.

Just because a spellcaster knows a particular method of spellcasting does not mean he has to use it whenever he casts a spell, or that he cannot learn spells that cannot be cast with that method. A spellcaster who knows how to cast spells with runes could cast the *Bane-spell* normally (without gaining the benefits or drawbacks of runes) or learn *Create Light* (a spell not susceptible to runic casting). Similarly, a magician could cast a spell normally by simply singing the incantation without using the songs of power rules.

THE SUBTLE MAGIC OF MIDDLE-EARTH

As mentioned above, magic exists throughout Middle-earth. Subtle, flavourful, and evocative, it is a key element of the setting, one the Narrator must always remain aware of—and which she can use to enhance the feel and flavour of the chronicle.

Because Middle-earth is innately magical, it possesses certain qualities lacking in mundane lands. Similarly, events and occurrences take place that could not in other lands. The Narrator can work these qualities and events into her stories, allowing the characters to take advantage of them—or run afoul of them. Players, by understanding the rules that govern how this subtle magic works, can find ways to use it, enhancing both their own abilities and the chronicle as a whole. Here are just some examples.

THE RIGHTNESS OF THINGS

The subtle magic of Middle-earth has its greatest dramatic effect when it displays, reflects, or reinforces the rightness (or wrongness) of certain actions. It echoes strong emotions, particularly good or kindly ones but also negative feelings. It helps to make the world what it should be, in an ideal or romantic sense, and it allows That Which Is Right to show through. For example, it might cause flowers to always bloom at a place where two heroes confess their love for each other, or it could ensure that the weather remains clear and fine for a king's coronation—because it is Right that things should be that way.

THE MIRROR OF NATURE

In Middle-earth, the weather and other natural effects reflect and embody great events that take place, or the moral qualities of certain actions. When Sauron sends his forces to war, a dark storm arises from the East (his stronghold), blotting out the hope of Gondor. But when the fortunes of battle shift and the Captains of the West gain the upper hand, the sunlight breaks through the clouds, dispelling the darkness and bringing new hope. When the Nazgûl fly overhead, or their cry is heard, the wind suddenly becomes chill. Near Mordor, the sunlight seems defiled to Frodo and Sam—corrupted by the evil will of the Enemy.

The subtle magic shapes and affects even the land itself. In places like Rivendell and Lórien, the land is bright and beautiful, whether it is allowed to remain wild or shaped by the hand of Elf or Man. But in or near places controlled by the Enemy, blight, foulness, and desiccation govern. This quality affects not only the appearance of the land, but the people who live or visit there. In Rivendell, fear and anxiety vanish like fog in morning sunlight. Those who bathe in Nimrodel feel weariness wash away from them. Travellers in Sauron's ravaged lands find it difficult to rest or heal.

Similarly, where evil has been done or evil once dwelt, a shadow lies upon the land. Where Smaug fell into the Long Lake, no ship sails, and no one dares swim. Where Trolls once lived, things do not feel right to the enemies of Sauron. The Shadow has infected nearly all of Mirkwood with its horror.

And not only evil can mark the land, but great tragedy as well. Eregion echoes with the lament for the long-departed Noldor who dwelt there ages ago. The voice of Nimrodel can be heard near the stream named for her. The ground where Snowmane's body was burned remains black and barren forever. Subtle magic can affect objects as well. Witness Denethor's burning hands showing evermore in the *palantír* he died holding.

The subtle magic also reflects the use or effect of some spells and skills. For example, in the right circumstances, the use of Intimidate or the casting of *Evoke Awe* may cause the weather to suddenly change. Clouds may gather and thunder rumble, or perhaps the clouds part and allow a beam of sunlight through.

In some places, the land seems almost alive—or at least possessed of feelings and motives. For instance, Gimli describes Caradhras as motivated by 'ill-will,' ascribing to it a degree of stubborn malice. Winds from the West dispel the last remnants of the spirits of both Sauron and Saruman. The very existence of the Ents, manifestations of the spirit and needs of trees, is the ultimate form of this personification of the natural world.

The Narrator can represent these effects in many ways in a chronicle. Spellcasters, Elves, and other sensitive characters might be allowed a Perception, Lore, or other appropriate test to recognize the shadow that lies upon a land, or a region's beneficent qualities. To reflect the feel of a region, the Narrator can provide bonuses or penalties to Stamina tests to resist Weariness, increase or decrease the rate at which characters recover lost Weariness Levels or heal from injuries, impose modifiers to the effects or Weariness TNs of spells, or make certain attributes or skills—particularly Bearing, Inspire, and Intimidate—easier or harder to use.

Beast Speech

In Middle-earth, many animals can think and even talk. Beorn's cattle and horses can speak with him. The spiders of Mirkwood have an evil, hissing speech. The Dwarves of Erebor have long spoken with the local ravens and recognized the wisdom of thrushes. Foxes wonder about the wanderings of Hobbits through the Shire at night. The great Eagles can speak aloud. Sometimes, as with the Eagles, characters and animals can converse freely. At other times, spells are needed.

HONOURING THE VALIANT

The subtle magic also honours and aids those who are heroic and valiant, while giving no succour—and perhaps even hindering—the malicious and wicked. For example, it helps Bard slay the dragon Smaug, showing him just the right place to shoot the dragon and then guiding the bowman's aim. The Anduin protects Boromir's body, ensuring that none dishonour it. Magic brings great tidings from afar, so Boromir's brother and father can hear the blowing of his horn at his death, though he is many leagues away. And, combined with dramatic need, the world sees to it that heroes and their companions arrive where they need to be in a timely fashion. Witness the meeting of Halbarad and his Rangers with Aragorn near Isengard, or the arrival of Aragorn at Pelargir in time to stop the Corsairs and take their ships.

The Narrator can simulate some this quality of subtle magic—such as help with the slaying of fell beasts—by providing a *dramatic heroism* bonus. When a character undertakes a crucial and heroic task and the player roleplays well, the Narrator can grant him extra Courage only usable for that task. Straightforward test result bonuses or a temporary Favour of Fortune edge may be even more appropriate in some situations.

However, Narrators should not try to simulate other facets of these matters with game rules. Instead, they can simply include them as elements of the story that illustrate the nature of Middle-earth. Some aspects of subtle magic, particularly timely arrivals, may require careful structuring of an adventure or orchestrating of the actions of the player characters, but with a little forethought that should not prove much of a problem.

THE POWER OF WORDS

> *'The change in the wizard's voice was astounding. Suddenly it became menacing, powerful, harsh as stone. A shadow seemed to pass over the high sun...'*
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

Thanks to the subtle magic of Middle-earth, words themselves can have power. Elven-speech often remains graven on the minds of those who hear it, and the invocation of Elbereth, other Valar, or sometimes other powers—such as Tom Bombadil—can bring hope and courage to good folk trapped in dark places. On the other hand, as Gandalf's speaking of the Ring-inscription in the Black Speech shows, evil words can darken shadows and make stout hearts quail.

Narrators can use any appropriate effect from the following list to simulate the power of words. They can als

HEIGHTENED COURAGE: When a character invokes the name of Elbereth or another Vala and spends a point of Courage on a task, he receives a +4 bonus instead of the usual +3.

INSPIRATION: Speaking or hearing the names of the Valar or other inspiring words grants a +2 bonus for Inspire or Willpower resist Intimidate Fear) and like effects.

PAIN EVIL: When confronting the chief servants of the Enemy, or other creatures of great evil (such as the Witch-king, Shelob, or the Mouth of Sauron), the names of the Valar cause them discomfiture and pain, imposing a –1 penalty on all tests for one round.

DISPEL DESPAIR: If the characters are in a place, such as Mordor, where the subtle magic makes it harder to rest or regain Weariness Levels, speaking names and words of inspiration and power can dispel those effects for one hour once per day.

Of course, there are some restrictions on characters' abilities to invoke the power of words; they cannot simply go around shouting 'Elbereth!' and getting bonuses whenever they like. First, invoking the power of words requires a minimum of one action, sometimes as much as a full round. Second, characters can only get a bonus from invoking the power of words when it's dramatically appropriate for them to do so—for example, when they are facing a powerful, evil foe, not just whenever they fight some Orcs. Third, they must roleplay the situation appropriately, not just say, 'My character's shouting "Elbereth!" I want heightened Courage.'

The use and effects of invoking the power of words is entirely at the Narrator's discretion.

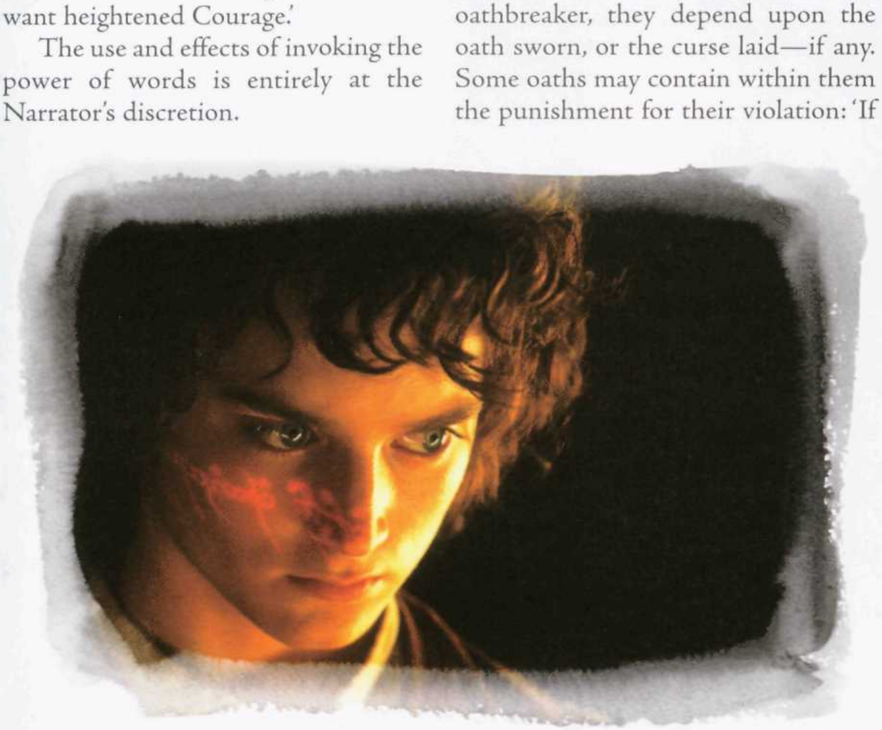
Oaths and Curses

' "It is a lie that comes from the Enemy. I know the Men of Rohan; true and valiant, our allies, dwelling still in the lands that we gave them long ago." '
— Boromir, The Fellowship of the Ring

Related to the general power of words is the effect of oaths and curses. In Middle-earth, sworn oaths have real effect and so do the curses placed upon those who break them. The curse laid by Isildur on the Dead Men of Dunharrow is the best-known example, but it is by no means the only one.

In *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*, binding oaths are usually represented by the Oath flaw (page 156), though they can also occur as the result of roleplaying and story development. If a character swears an oath—flaw or no—he must abide by it. If he does not, the consequences of his oathbreaking shall fall upon him in full measure.

As for what consequences those might be and how they affect the oathbreaker, they depend upon the oath sworn, or the curse laid—if any. Some oaths may contain within them the punishment for their violation: 'If I fail to meet you at the Fords of Bruinen on midsummer's day, may my line falter and no male child be born of my seed.' Other oaths are more general, leaving the victim of the oathbreaking to specify the punishment with a curse—as Isildur did—or the Narrator to decide upon a fittingly dramatic penalty.



For some oaths and curses, the punishment can be expressed in game terms. For example, a curse of feebleness may result in a reduction of Strength, Vitality, or Stamina, or a penalty to tests involving them. A curse that 'no sword will ever rest easy in your hand' could be simulated by imposing a penalty on Armed Combat tests. Others, such as failure of a bloodline or service even after death, simply become an element of the game. Few rules, if any, are needed for them.

Curses, too, may be laid for other than the breaking of oaths: for great wrongs done, such as the slaying of one's child, or for bitter torment inflicted. Such curses are usually conditional: a specified punishment shall beset the wrongdoer unless he makes amends in some fashion. Unfortunately for player characters, curses seem to have little, if any, effect on the servants of the Shadow. They can lay curse after curse on Sauron or the Witch-king, and nothing happens, perhaps because such creatures are already cursed by their very nature. Only the PCs themselves—and NPCs not directly in service to the East—are susceptible to their effects.

Curses are subject to the same restrictions as invoking the power of words. Characters must take the proper time, players must roleplay the laying of the curse well, and—above all—the cursing must be dramatically appropriate. Additionally, the Narrator should charge the cursing character one or more points of Courage to represent the impassioned fury that inspires him and powers the curse. The use and effects of oaths and curses is entirely at the Narrator's discretion.

FATE AND FORETELLINGS

> ' "Believe rather that it is so ordered that we, who sit here, and none others, must now find counsel for the peril of the world." '
> — *Elrond, The Fellowship of the Ring*

Last but certainly not least, the subtle magic of Middle-earth manifests itself through the role of fate and prophecy. Although these subjects—and the related role of free will—are discussed in Chapter Ten, because they are an aspect of magic they deserve some consideration here as well.

Fate

> ' "Just chance brought me then, if chance you call it." '
> — *Tom Bombadil, The Fellowship of the Ring*

In Middle-earth, 'fate' is a concept of importance, but one which has certain restrictions placed upon it of which the Narrator must remain aware. Fate never dictates a character's actions or strips him of his free will. The Ring may have been fated to come to Frodo, but he was not fated to take it to Mount Doom. He might have chosen to do anything with it: throw it away, keep it and do nothing, try to claim its power. Similarly, though Elrond notes that the persons present at his council were drawn there by order and not seeming chance, they were not forced to remain. Any of them could have declared his disinterest and walked away. Despite the ominous overtones of the word, fate is not a shackle binding characters to unavoidable courses of action. It may place them in the midst of those courses of action and force them to choose one, but it never strips them of their free will.

Thus, for the most part, fate is simply an aspect of the world of Middle-earth, something for PC and NPC alike to mention to explain events or provide advice. Rather than being a quantifiable part of the setting—something that the rules can define with numbers, charts, and modifiers—it is a nebulous thing, always present in the background, rarely thrusting itself forward into the story. There are no 'fate tests,' no rules by which the Narrator can force a player character to follow his destiny.

However, there are ways to reflect the role of fate through minor rules or deft narrating. For example, some edges, such as Armour of Heroes and Favour of Fortune, represent, at least in part, the fact that fate looks out for characters—not protecting them, exactly, but smiling upon them. Similarly, if a Narrator wishes to weave a story in which a burden or quest is placed upon a character's shoulders, she can orchestrate events in her chronicle to ensure that the character must confront this potential duty. What the character chooses to do about it remains up to him, of course. But there's nothing wrong with arranging an encounter to steer him towards a decision, or even with providing an extra point or two of Courage as a dramatic heroism bonus to help see him through the dangers he must confront before he discovers the burden fated for him.

Prophecy

> ' "I do not foretell, for all foretelling is now vain: on the one hand lies darkness, on the other only hope." '
> — *Galadriel, The Fellowship of the Ring*

Many persons in Middle-earth seem gifted with the ability to foretell the future, even if that ability comes to them only once —and cryptically, as with Faramir's dream. Wizards, in particular, seem prone to insights regarding the days to come. Sometimes, as with Glorfindel's prophecy regarding the Witch-king's doom or Malbeth the Seer's pronouncement about the Paths of the Dead, their words come down through the long years, providing wisdom and guidance when they are most needed.

Foresight is not the ultimate boon it might at first seem. When characters experience forebodings, prophetic dreams, and moments of prophetic insight, they do not receive crystal-clear visions of what will happen later today, or tomorrow, or in a month or a year. Rather, foresight most often comes upon them as vague feelings and beliefs or mysterious dreams or the like. It rarely provides specific information or guidance, except when it touches on matters of little import to a game chronicle. ('I foretell that the span of your life shall be greater than the measure of Men, unless evil befalls you or you fail at the test.' — *Elrond, The Return of the King*) Rather, its meaning is plain only in hindsight or when analyzed by those of great learning and wisdom. The significance of Faramir's dream only became evident when it was presented to an entire council of Elven-lords, wizards, and members of the Free Peoples. Even Denethor, renowned for his loremastery, could not unravel it.

In game terms, characters who are Foresighted (see page 165) sometimes experience prophetic insight, dreams that warn of some calamity, or the like. Occasionally, other characters may have similar insights—much the way Aragorn foretold that Gandalf should beware Moria—but theirs are less frequent and less helpful. The Noldor and the Drúedain seem particularly likely to have prophetic gifts or flashes of foresight.

The most important guideline for foretelling is that the Narrator controls what characters can learn through foresight. Foretelling isn't a way for characters to discover everything that's going to occur in the last half of a chapter, the vulnerabilities of their enemies, or the location of hidden treasures. Prophecy may provide guidance on these questions, but it should never answer them directly and openly.

In many cases, foresight's best role in the game is to provide atmosphere. If a player, in the midst of good roleplaying, utters a minor prophecy of some sort ('A foresight is on me, and I warn you: Do not read the Scrolls of Minardil!'), the Narrator should reward that player by doing his best to work the prophecy into the story and follow through on it.

As Elrond notes ('... under the Shadow all is dark to me[,]' *The Fellowship of the Ring*), foretelling is much more difficult, if not impossible, when directed against people, places, or things covered by the Shadow. In these cases, the Narrator should apply a penalty of –5 or more to the Foresight test. On the other hand, approaching death is said to clarify powers of foresight. If a character is Near Death, he receives a +3 (or greater) bonus to his Foresight tests.

PRACTITIONERS OF MAGIC

Broadly speaking, spellcasters in Middle-earth fall into one of two related categories: magicians (including loremasters and sorcerers) and wizards.

MAGICIANS

By far the most common type of spellcaster in Middle-earth is the magician, less powerful and generally less learned than the wizard. Indeed, many 'magicians' are nothing of the sort, being mere charlatans tricking ignorant folk through jugglery and deceit. But the practice of spellcasting is by no means an unknown art in Middle-earth. Some who claim powers of magic do in fact possess them.

Like wizards, magicians (and loremasters who can cast spells) tend to be solitary and secretive, preferring their own company to that of others. This allows them to pursue their studies and the perfection of their craft undisturbed by the mundane needs of common folk. At the same time, the needs of their craft and the wisdom that often comes to them as a result of their lore sometimes compels them to become involved in adventures. Moreover, some, in hopes of the furtherance of their lore and power, join together with other magicians in groups. These groups vary wildly from place to place. A formal order patterned after that of the Five Wizards, a coven of 'witches' associated with some Easterling kingdom, and a group of Gondorian scholars who meet regularly to discuss and debate could all qualify as groups of magicians.

Magicians acquire their powers in one of two ways. The first is through an inner talent or capacity for magic. These magicians are, in a sense, 'attuned' to the magic of Middle-earth, and they learn how to employ it as they will. This is most commonly seen among the Elves, whose innately magical nature often leads them to develop great powers of spellcasting. The second method, mostly seen among Men and Dwarves, is through study and lore. Eager for magical power, this sort of magician spends long hours poring over ancient tomes and scrolls, and seeking places and items of enchantment. Though not inherently evil, this method of learning magic is suspect, since it often leads to a fascination with 'dark arts' and a descent into the practice of sorcery.

◆

WIZARDS

More powerful than magicians are spellcasters who belong to the 'Order of Wizards.' The mightiest of these, the chiefs of the order, are the Five Wizards: Saruman the White (leader of the order), Gandalf the Grey, Radagast the Brown, and the two who passed into the East and came never into the records of the West. Although few—aside from certain Elven-lords like Elrond, Círdan, and Galadriel—know it, these five and the other early members of their order are emissaries from the Uttermost West. The Valar sent them to aid and encourage the Free Peoples to resist the Shadow. They first began arriving in Middle-earth about the year 1000 of the Third Age.

Though they are in truth something more than Men, the Five Wizards and others of their kind from across the Sea are constrained by the shapes they must take in Middle-earth. They resemble Men of age and wisdom, and though long-lived and powerful, they are subject to the same ills that affect Men: hunger, weariness, pain, death. The rules governing them inhibit as well what they can do on behalf of the Free Peoples. They may not aid them directly, either by fighting directly against the Shadow or attempting to oppose its power with power. Instead, the wizards aid, counsel, support, and defend, encouraging the Free Peoples to resist and endure. Though at least one wizard, Saruman, eventually fell from this lofty path and took power to himself in an effort to dominate and control others—and some, such as Radagast, ignored their duties for love of other things—most remain true to the cause and the oaths they swore.

After arriving in Middle-earth, one of the things the Five Wizards did was seek out those among the Free Peoples who might be worthy of membership in the order. Finding magicians of noble heart and valorous mien, they trained and tutored them, eventually inducting the worthiest of their stu-

Spellcasters' Skills

The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game doesn't require magicians and wizards to have Spellcasting as a skill. They can cast their spells automatically, having to roll only to resist Weariness. However, spellcasters do tend to have certain skills in common. Not every spellcaster has all of these skills, but most have at least a few of them.

Craft: Elixirs: A spellcaster with this skill knows how to concoct potions and elixirs from carefully gathered ingredients, according to elaborate formulae handed down through books of lore. These brews have little, if any, magical effect, though some may act as medicines or antidotes for poisons. See 'Poisons' on page 246 for more about this.

Healing: Many magicians and wizards learn the arts of leechcraft. Wizards in particular find that the skills of the healer complement their duty to aid and encourage the enemies of the Enemy.

Insight: Spellcasters are learned and wise and often able to see into the hearts and minds of people. This skill represents that ability nicely.

Inspire and Intimidate: These two skills reflect spellcasters' strength of personality and will, their ability to persuade others to do as they ought. Wizards are especially likely to have both of these skills. For either type of spellcaster, the Power specialty for Intimidate is most appropriate. It represents their ability to impress others with their magical might.

Language: Most spellcasters are well versed in many tongues, particularly Quenya and Sindarin.

Lore: In many ways, Lore is the skill that most defines spellcasters. Even the least of them knows a great deal of the history, peoples, and things of Middle-earth. Some Lore skills known primarily to spellcasters include:

Magic: General knowledge of wizardry, spells, and how people practice magic in Middle-earth.

Rings of Power: Because their mission is so wound up with the history and fate of the Rings of Power, many wizards have studied them extensively. Similar Lores could be taken for enchanted swords and other types of magical items.

Star-lore: Some spellcasters believe that, by studying the lore of the heavens and tracking the movements of the stars, they can foretell the future. Whether this is true depends on the Narrator, but even if it is not, the lore itself still has value.

dents as wizards themselves. These wizards, in turn, trained others, all sworn to the rules governing the Five. Slowly, over the course of centuries, they built a group of wise and powerful spellcasters whose greatest test—the final struggle against Sauron—came at the end of the Third Age.

In game terms, characters who want to become wizards must qualify for the wizard elite order (page 111). Like magicians, they should be rare. Most adventuring groups don't have one.

SPELLS

Acquiring and Learning Spells

To acquire spells to cast, the spellcasting orders—loremaster, magician, and wizard—must select the appropriate Spellcasting order ability. Each time they select this ability, they gain a number of spell picks with which to select spells. Magicians and wizards each get five spell picks; loremasters get two.

Most spells cost one spell pick to learn. A few spells, more powerful or rarer than others, cost more. Their individual descriptions note this. Characters can devote extra picks to a spell to improve their ability to use it, as follows:

Practiced: For a number of spell picks equal to that needed to learn the spell, a character gains a +1 test result bonus for Weariness tests for the spell. This option may only be selected up to twice for each spell.

INCREASED EFFECT: With some spells, as noted in their descriptions, characters can spend extra spell picks to increase a spell's effectiveness without increasing its TN for Weariness tests. For example, by allotting extra spell picks to *Create Light*, a spellcaster can increase the radius of the lit area.

EASE OF USE: For some spells, characters can, by assigning extra spell picks, make them easier to cast by eliminating the need for words of command or gestures, or even converting the spell into a magical ability. See 'Magical Abilities,' below, for more information.

LEARNING SPELLS TAKES TIME

Those are the rules for learning spells. How characters learn spells in the game, as part of the chronicle, is another issue entirely. Some, particularly Elves, may simply develop new spells as they explore the extent of their magical powers. On the other hand, most Men and Dwarves have to study long and hard to acquire each new spell. The Narrator should address this matter with each spellcasting PC, working it into the chronicle as necessary.

A character who has to study to learn new spells must allocate the spell picks and then take the time to learn the new spells. The character cannot study for a new spell if he's away from his collection of books and scrolls. Once he gets to his collection and has the time to delve into it, he must study for one week for each pick allocated to the spell. This process can be interrupted and restarted without penalty. Also, such characters can study in other appropriate libraries as well and can even start studying in one collection and take up study again in another. The Narrator may rule that a certain spell can only be learned from a particular library, but the process of studying most spells is fairly portable.

A character who learns spells innately may take a while to acquire them in full. The first time the character casts a new spell, he suffers a –10 penalty to the Weariness test. This penalty remains in place for at least one week. After that, it remains until the character gains a superior success on a Weariness test while casting the spell. At that point, the penalty falls to –5 and remains at that level for at least one week too. After that, once the character gets another superior success while casting the spell, the penalty vanishes permanently.

CASTING SPELLS

In *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*, casting a spell does not require a skill test or the like. If a character knows a spell, he can use it whenever he likes, provided he meets the requirements for it: words of command, gestures, and withstanding Weariness.

WORDS OF COMMAND

All spells require the caster to speak words of command: incantations, invocations, and the like. A spellcaster who cannot speak—perhaps because his enemies have captured and gagged him, or because he wants to sneak past a guard and would be heard if he spoke—cannot cast spells.

Note that words of command (a general term) differ from a *Word of Command* (a spell).

GESTURES

Spells require gestures as well. To light a fire, a magician has to pick up and hold a piece of kindling or thrust his staff into the woodpile. To open a door, he must touch it or wave his hands over it. To create or project light, he must raise his hand. A spellcaster who is bound or shackled cannot cast some or all of his spells, depending on how restricted his movements are and the type of gestures required.

WEARINESS

Most importantly, a spellcaster must be able to withstand the fatiguing effects of his spells. Casting magic is very wearying. Even the least spells can tire out a character. This factor, more than any other, restricts spellcasters and governs their use of their powers.

Each spell listed below has a *Weariness TN*. When a character casts the spell, he must make a Stamina test against this TN. If he succeeds, he casts the spell as normal. If he fails, he loses one Weariness Level and cannot complete the spell. If he suffers a complete failure, he loses two Weariness Levels. A disastrous failure costs three Weariness Levels.

Furthermore, the more spells a character casts in a short period of time, the harder it becomes to resist their drain on his endurance. For each spell cast within one minute of casting any other spell, the character suffers a –3 test result penalty per additional spell for the Weariness test. For example, if a character casts one spell per round for three rounds (a total of 15 seconds), the first Weariness test suffers no penalty, the second suffers a –3 test result penalty, and the third suffers a –6 test result penalty. If he casts another spell 30 seconds later, he suffers a –9 test result penalty on the Weariness test.

Spellcasters also find it harder to resist fatigue when they have multiple spells active at once. Some spells have lengthy durations. For example, *Create Light* lasts for 20 minutes times the caster's Bearing. For every spell a character has active, he suffers a –3 test result penalty to Weariness tests for other spells cast during that time period. This penalty is *cumulative* with the penalty for multiple castings within a minute.

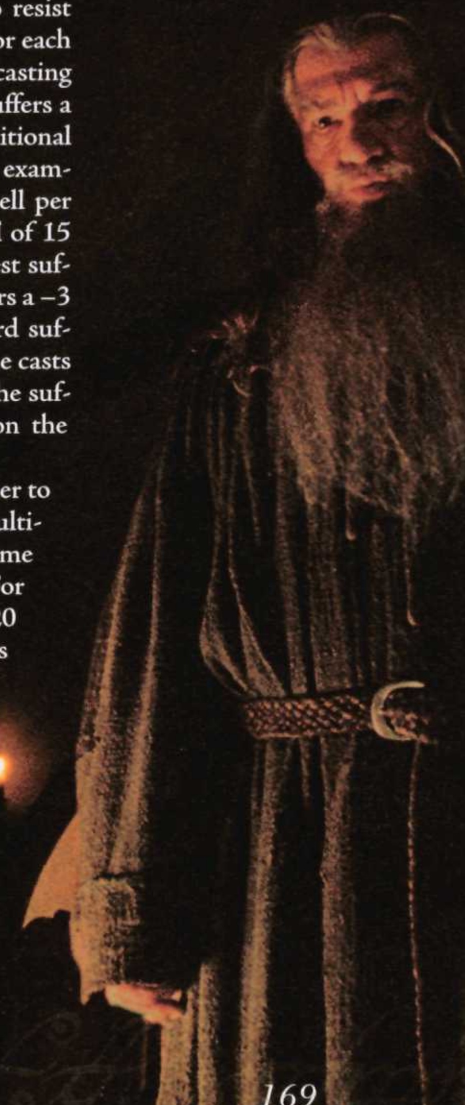
EXAMPLE: *Belengol the magician and his friends are adventuring in Mirkwood. The forest is so dark and gloomy that Belengol casts* Create Light *on the end of his staff. The Weariness TN is 5; Belengol easily succeeds with his Stamina test.*

Unfortunately, his spell quickly attracts a nearby group of giant spiders! A mere 20 seconds after Belengol creates light, the adventurers are attacked by the fearsome arachnids. Belengol casts Lightning *to strike one of the spiders down. The Weariness TN for that spell is 12, but Belengol suffers a –3 penalty for having cast another spell within a minute, and another –3 for having another spell active (his* Create Light*). That makes the total penalty –6. He rolls and applies the modifiers for a test result of 12, barely making it.*

Two rounds later, Belengol sees that one of his friends is about to get ambushed by a giant spider dropping on him from above. He casts Lightning *again; this time he suffers another –3 test result penalty for casting this, his third spell, within a minute, for a total penalty of –9. He rolls and applies the modifiers for a test result of 14, failing. He loses one Weariness Level and becomes Winded. He fails to cast the spell, and the spider lands on his comrade.*

At the Narrator's option, when casting a spell, spellcasters can avoid the need for words of command or gestures by increasing a spell's Weariness TN. It adds +3 to eliminate either one of these requirements, +6 to eliminate both.

Also at the Narrator's option, when casting a spell, spellcasters can improve its duration, its range, the area it affects (if applicable), the damage it does, or any other quantified effect, by increasing a spell's Weariness TN. Improving any one of these effects by 25% increases the Weariness TN by +3. Improving it by 50% increases the TN by +6. No more than a 50% increase for any aspect is possible.



Exercising Restraint

Generally speaking, magicians and wizards must be careful about spellcasting. Casting too many spells in quick succession will almost certainly cause them to lose Weariness Levels, and each level lost only increases the chances of losing more levels and suffering more penalties, quickly making the character unable to accomplish much of anything. The best tactic for spellcasters in many situations is to cast no more than one or two spells in any dangerous situation and to rely on skills and abilities otherwise. After all, even Gandalf, arguably the most powerful spellcaster in Middle-earth during the late Third Age, carried and used a sword.

Minimizing the casting of spells also helps to maintain the flavour and feel of your chronicle. Middle-earth is not a world where spellcasters are common, magic is easily and frequently worked, and spells have extremely powerful and flashy effects. Magic here is more low-key, used only in emergencies. For example, Gandalf didn't use his *Kindle Fire* spell to start the Fellowship's campfire every night. Only when they were in the Redhorn Gate—when no other means sufficed to start the fire and the lack of a fire could have meant the deaths of his comrades—did he employ magic. Similarly, the PC spellcasters in your chronicle should try to rein themselves in, saving their magic (and their stamina) for situations in which spells are truly needed.

COMBINING SPELLS

'The sparks were burning holes in the goblins, and the smoke that now fell from the roof made the air too thick for even their eyes to see through.'

— The Hobbit

There are times when a spellcaster needs to combine two or more spells into a single casting. For example, in the quote above, Gandalf is casting three spells at once: *Burning Sparks*, *Quench Fire*, and *Smoke-weaving*. By combining their effects into one, he accomplishes several things at once. Similarly, when Elrond raised the waters of the Bruinen to wash away the Nazgûl, Gandalf combined his magic with Elrond's to shape the water into the form of white horses and riders.

For a spellcaster to combine two spells, select the one that has the highest Weariness TN, then increase that by +3. If the spellcaster succeeds with that Stamina test, both spells are cast as normal, taking effect in a sequence chosen by the spellcaster. For each additional spell beyond two added to the combination, increase the Weariness test TN by another +1.

The Narrator must approve all proposed spell combinations after evaluating them for appropriateness and possible effects. She can disallow—or impose additional restrictions on—any combination that does not seem to suit the game, is unbalancingly powerful, or is otherwise objectionable. For example, combining *Burning Sparks* and *Quench Fire* seems like a reasonable thing to do, since both are fire-related spells and the effects of one flow logically from the other. The same might apply to *Watershaping* and *Quench Fire*. On the other hand, *Burning Sparks* and *Watershaping* would rarely, if ever, make an appropriate combination.

COUNTER-SPELLS

A spellcaster can cast a *counter-spell* to any spell that he knows. A counter-spell counteracts and dispels the effects of a spell, though it cannot reverse or repair permanent effects already achieved, such as the wounds inflicted by *Blast of Sorcery* or the destruction wrought by *Sundering*.

Casting a counter-spell requires the same casting time and Weariness TN as the spell being countered. (If the countering spellcaster has used extra spell picks to reduce the TN for that spell, use that TN instead.) If necessary, the spellcaster must delay so that he casts the spell at the same time as the other spellcaster. Alternatively, a spellcaster can declare a counter-spell attempt prior to his turn in response to a spell, though this counts toward his action allowance for the round. He can even cast a counter-spell if he has already used up his action allowance for the round, but he suffers a cumulative –5 test penalty per additional action required.

At this point, both spellcasters make opposed Bearing tests. If the magician casting the spell wins, his spell functions as normal. If the opposing spellcaster wins, his counter-spell disrupts the spell, preventing it from taking effect—or countering its effects.

Some spellcasters are particularly skilled at countering certain spells. For each additional spell pick devoted to a spell for counter-spelling, a spellcaster receives a +5 bonus on opposed Bearing tests to counter that spell.

At the Narrator's discretion, for one spell pick a character can learn a sorcery spell *only* as a counter-spell. Such a counter-spell does not count as a sorcery spell or cause the character to earn Corruption.

A character does not have to counter-spell his own spells to terminate them. Merely by willing it so, he can end a spell he has cast at any time prior to the normal ending of its duration.

MAGIC ABILITIES

'"If you must know more, his name is Beorn. He is very strong, and he is a skin-changer."'

— Gandalf, The Hobbit

Spellcasters sometimes become so attuned to their magical powers that their spells become *magic abilities*: innate powers that don't require Weariness tests, words of command, or gestures like spells do. Magic abilities are rare—except among Elven spellcasters, for whom they are quite common—but not unheard of.

Not every spell can become a magic ability. For example, *Beast Speech* and *Mastery of Shapes* can become abilities, but *Lightning* and *Quench Fire* cannot. Generally, spells that affect one's self can become abilities, while spells that affect other characters or the environment cannot. Each spell description indicates whether characters can convert it into a magic ability.

Turning a spell into a magic ability is a three-step process. First, the spellcaster must use three spell picks to eliminate the need to use words of command or gestures with the spell.

Second, he must then eliminate the need to use gestures or words of command—whichever he did not dispense with in the first step. This costs three spell picks as well.

After either of these stages, a spellcaster may stop if he wants to. He can now cast the spell without words of command or gestures, but all other spellcasting rules apply.

As the third and final step, the spellcaster uses four spell picks to eliminate the spell's Weariness TN and turn it into an ability. He can now use the spell anytime as an innate magic ability. Activating the ability costs 1 action, though the Narrator may rule that some abilities are always active if that makes more sense. The ability has its normal duration, but of course the character can immediately activate it again when the duration expires, so in effect it can last as long as he likes. If necessary and desirable, the player and Narrator should work together to refine the magic ability, making it both a logical thing within the world of Middle-earth and fun to use. Perhaps the character can allocate additional spell picks to eliminate other aspects of the ability he finds objectionable.

Since people like Beorn—who aren't spellcasters but do have magic abilities—exist in Middle-earth, the Narrator can allow non-spellcasting characters to acquire magic abilities as well. Typically this costs 10 advancement picks (two whole advancements worth), but the Narrator can vary the cost depending upon the usefulness and power of the desired ability.

THE MIDDLE-EARTH GRIMOIRE

'"I once knew every spell in all the tongues of Elves or Men or Orcs, that was ever used for such a purpose. I can still remember ten score of them..."'
— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

Described below are over 70 spells for characters to choose from. Each is presented using the following format:

NAME: Each description begins with the name of the spell. If [Sorcery] follows the name, the spell is one of sorcery, something that heroic characters learn and use only at great peril.

CASTING TIME: The time it takes for characters to cast the spell. A '1' or '2' indicates the number of actions required in combat. Other entries ('1 minute' or the like) indicate specific

TABLE 7.1: MASTER SPELL LIST

	CASTING			WEARINESS				
SPELL NAME	TIME	RANGE	DURATION	TN	COST†	REQUISITE	METHOD	SPECIALTY
Animal Messenger	2	Touch	Special	5	1	Special**	Std.	Beasts
Bane-spell	1 min.	Touch	1 min.*	10	2		Std., Runes	None
Beast Speech	1	Self	1 min.*	5	1		Std., Ability	Beasts
Beast Summoning	2	Special	Special	8	1		Std., Song	Beasts
Blade Preservation	5 min.	Touch	50 yrs.*	5	1		Std., Runes, Song	None
Bladeshattering [S]	1	10 yds.	Instant	8	1		Std., Ability	Sorcery
Blast of Sorcery [S]	2	10 yds.*	Instant	12	2		Std., Song	Sorcery
Blinding Flash	1	5 yds.*	Instant	10	1**	Create Light	Std., Song	Fire
Break Binding	2	10 feet	Instant	8	1		Std.	None
Burning Sparks	1	10 feet	Instant	8	1	Kindle Fire	Std.	Fire
Calling	Special**	Special**	Special**	10	1		Std.	None
Change Hue	2	Self	10 min.*	8	1		Std., Ability	Beasts
Command [S]	2	10 yds.	1 hour*	15	3	Special**	Std.,Song, Ability	Sorcery
Crafting-spell	5 min.	Touch	Special**	12	1		Std., Runes, Song	None
Create Light	1	Touch	20 min.*	5	1**		Std.	Fire, Secret Fire
Display of Power	1	Self **	1 round	10	2	Special**	Std., Song, Ability	None
Dumbness [S]	1	10 feet*	1 min.*	8	1		Std., Song	Sorcery
Enhance Food	1 min.	Touch	Special**	5	1		Std., Ability	None
Enslave Beast [S]	2	5 feet*	1 day*	10	1	Special**	Std., Song	Beasts, Sorcery
Evoke Awe	1	Special**	1 round*	10	1	Bearing 8+	Std.	Secret Fire
Evoke Fear [S]	1	Special**	1 round*	10	1		Std., Ability	Sorcery
Exclusion	10 min.	Touch	1 year*	12	2		Std., Runes	None
Farseeing	5 min.	Special**	1 min.*	15	2	Perception 10+	Std., Song	None
Farspeaking	2	1 mile*	Concentration	9	1		Std.	None
Fiery Missile	1	Special**	Special**	7	1	Kindle Fire	Std.	Fire
Finding and Returning	1 min.	Touch	1 month*	10	1		Std., Runes	None
Fireshaping	1	1 foot*	Concentration	5**	1	Kindle Flame	Std.	Fire
Flame of Anor	2	20 feet*	Instant	10	2	Special**	Std.	Secret Fire
Fog-raising	1 min.	50 feet*	Special**	8	1		Std., Song	Air, Water
Fog-weaving	2	20 feet*	1 min.*	9	1	Fog-raising	Std., Song	Air, Water
Forgetfulness [S]	2	5 feet*	1 week*	12	1		Std., Song, Ability	Sorcery
Guarding-spell	1 min.	Touch	1 min.*	12	2		Std., Runes	None
Healing-spell	1 min.	Touch	Special**	10	1		Std.	Secret Fire
Holding-spell [S]	2	10 feet*	1 round*	12	2	Special**	Std.	Sorcery
Imitation-spell	2	3 feet*	Concentration	8	1	Mimicry 4+	Std.	None
Ithildin-fire	1 min.	Touch	Special**	5	1	Create Light	Std., Ability	None
Kindle Fire	1	Touch	Special**	5	1		Std.	Fire
Lightning	2	5 feet*	Instant	12	1	Create Light	Std.	Air
Mastery of Shapes	1 min.	Self	1 hour*	10	2	Change Hue	Std., Ability	Beasts
Mind-speech	1 min.	1 foot*	Concentration	10	1	Spoken Thoughts	Std., Ability	None
Misdirection	1 min.	Special**	1 hour*	12	2	Finding, Returning	Std.	None
Mist of Speed	1 hour	10 miles*	1 hour*	12	3	Fograising, Fogweaving	Std., Song	None
Naming	1 min.	Touch	Permanent	8	1	Beast Speech	Std.	Beasts
Opening-spell	2	Touch	Instant	7	1		Std.	None
Quench Fire	1	5 yds.*	Instant	Special**	1	Kindle Fire	Std.	Fire
Power of the Land	3 f/r	1 mile	Special**	12	3	Special**	Std., Song	Air, Beasts, Water

	Casting				Weariness			
Spell Name	Time	Range	Duration	TN	Cost†	Requisite	Method	Specialty
Rain-ward	1	Self	Concentration	5	1		Std.	Air, Water
Reading the Heart	*1 min.*	**10 feet*	*Instant*	*9*	*1*	*Special***	*Std., Ability*	*None*
Resist Fear	1	Self	1 round*	8	1		Std., Ability	Secret Fire
Ruin [S]	2	Touch	1 round*	12	2	Shatter	Std., Runes	Sorcery
Scribe Moon-letters	1 min. per	10 letters	*Self	Permanent	7	1	Std., Runes, Ability	None
Sense Power	1	*10 feet*	1 min.	5	1		Std., Ability	None
Shadow of Fear [S]	2	*Special**	Special**	12	1	Special**	Std., Ability	Sorcery
Shad.&Phantoms [S]	1 min.	Special**	1 hour*	10	1	Wizard's Guise	Std.	Sorcery
Shatter	1	5 feet*	Instant	8	1		Std.	None
Shutting-spell	1 min.	Touch	1 hour*	8	1		Std., Runes	None
Slumber	2	5 feet*	1 hour*	10	1		Std., Song	None
Smoke-weaving	1	1 foot*	Concentration	5	1		Std.	Fire
Spellbinding	1	5 feet*	Special**	10	1		Std.	None
Spoken Thoughts	2	Self	1 hour*	7	1		Std., Ability	None
Springtime	1 min.	Special**	Concentration	12	1	Specail**	Std., Song, Ability	Secret Fire
Sundering	2	5 feet*	Instant	15	2	Shatter	Std., Song	None
Transformation	2	1 foot*	Instant	15	3	Special**	Std., Song	None
Veil	1 min.	Self	1 hour*	10	1		Std., Ability	None
Veiling Shadow [S]	1 min.	100 feet*	1 hour*	12	2		Std., Song	Sorcery
Victory-spell	1 min.	Touch	1 min.*	12	2		Std., Runes	None
Voice of Command	1	Special**	Special**	10	2	Special**	Std.	None
Voice of Suasion	1	Special**	1 min.*	10	1		Std., Ability	None
Watershaping	1	50 feet*	Concentration	10	1		Std., Song	Water
Wind-mastery	2	50 feet*	Special**	10	1		Std., Song	Air
Wizard's Guise	1 min.	Self	1 hour*	8	1		Std.	None
Wizard's Hand	1	5 feet*	Instant	10	1		Std.	None
Word of Command	1	Special**	Special**	13	(Special**)	3	Special**	Std. None

* per point of Bearing

** see spell description

† number of spell picks

[S] denotes a Sorcery spell

units of time. Spells cast as runes or songs of power take longer (see page 161).

Just as with skills, the degree of success on the Weariness test can affect how long it takes to cast a spell. An extraordinary success, for instance, can cut the time to 25% of what is normally required. Characters cannot reduce the casting time for spells cast using runes or songs of power. However, a disastrous failure can cause the character to waste even more time using such methods.

RANGE: The effective range of the spell, typically in yards. Beyond it, the spell cannot function. A range of 'Self' indicates the spell only works on the caster. A range of 'Touch' indicates he must touch the target or recipient of the spell, which usually requires a successful unarmed attack as a part of the casting. This 'attack' counts as a free action.

DURATION: How long the spell's effects last. If 'Instant'—the duration of many dangerous spells like *Lightning*—the spell takes effect at once (it damages its target, for example), though the effects of the spell (the damage suffered) may linger for much longer.

A duration of 'Concentration' means the spell remains in effect as long as the caster focuses upon it to the exclusion of other activities. If the caster is distracted (by an attack, being subjected to Intimidate, loud noises, or the like) or tries to perform any task requiring a test, he must make a TN 15 Wits test to maintain the spell. If he fails, the spell ceases to function.

WEARINESS TN: The TN for the Stamina test needed to resist losing Weariness Levels when casting the spell.

COST: The spell-pick cost to learn the spell. Any requisites for learning the spell are also listed here.

METHOD: How characters can cast the spell. 'Standard' indicates the spell can be cast in the normal fashion. 'Runes' means it can be cast using runes. 'Song' means a character can cast it as a song of power. 'Ability' means characters can convert the spell to a magic ability.

SPECIALTY: The spell specialties (see page 161) the spell belongs to, if any.

EFFECT: How the spell works in game terms.

ANIMAL MESSENGER

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: Touch
DURATION: Special
WEARINESS TN: 5
COST: 1 spell pick
REQUISITE: *Beast Speech* or *Beast Summoning*
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: Beasts

EFFECT: With this spell, the caster can use a beast or bird as a messenger, imparting to it words of advice or information and sending it to take those words to someone else. The caster must have the creature available to him—perhaps because it is a pet or companion, perhaps through *Beast Summoning* or other magic. Then he speaks his message to it and describes to it who to take the message to and where that person can be found. The creature leaves to search for that person. It travels and searches for a number of hours equal to the spellcaster's Bearing. If it finds the person, it gets close enough to him to communicate its message and does so. The recipient can automatically understand the message, even if he cannot ordinarily speak with beasts. If the creature fails to find its quarry within the spell's duration, the spell ends, and the creature returns to its normal pursuits.

BANE-SPELL

CASTING TIME: 1 minute
RANGE: Touch
DURATION: 1 minute per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 10
COST: 2 spell picks
METHOD: Standard, Runes
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: With this spell, the caster can lay upon a weapon the power to cause special harm to a particular type of creature or being. The caster must specify the type of creature affected. Examples include 'Orcs,' 'wolves,' 'dragons,' 'Trolls,' or 'Dunlendings.' By increasing the spell's TN by +3, the caster can expand the target group to cover more than one type of being: for example, 'Orcs and Trolls,' 'beasts,' 'servants of Sauron,' or 'the Free Peoples.'

A *Bane-spelled* weapon provides a +5 bonus to Armed Combat or Ranged Combat tests to strike the type of being against whom it is enchanted. That typically guarantees at least one extra degree of success, and thus greater damage. Additionally, at the Narrator's discretion, a bane-weapon may have the ability to pierce or diminish protective spells used by the target, such as *Bladeshattering* or the *Guarding-spell*.

BEAST SPEECH

CASTING TIME: 1
RANGE: Self
DURATION: 1 minute per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 5
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard, Ability
SPECIALTY: Beasts

EFFECT: This spell grants to the caster the power to speak with birds and animals. He can speak with any creature close enough to hear him, and that creature can automatically understand him and respond with Wits equal to those of a typical Man.

Other people listening to the conversation merely hear sounds like animal noises.

At the Narrator's option, a spellcaster can cast this spell upon another character by touch, but only when casting it as a standard spell, not when using it as a magic ability.

BEAST SUMMONING

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: Special
DURATION: Special
WEARINESS TN: 8
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard, Song
SPECIALTY: Beasts

EFFECT: This spell allows a caster to call to himself beasts and birds. When he casts it, he must specify the type of animal he wishes to summon, either specifically (horses, thrushes, foxes, and so on) or broadly (large four-footed animals, small four-footed animals, fish, birds, and so on). Any creatures within 200 yards times the caster's Bearing that fit the description travel to him at best possible speed for a number of minutes equal to his Bearing. Once they arrive at his location, they wait calmly near him, or at his feet, for the duration of the spell. If the duration expires before they can arrive, they stop travelling toward him when the spell ends. Animals who have reached him may leave when the spell ends, or may choose to remain nearby, converse with him if possible, and so forth. They will not attack or harm the caster unless he threatens or hurts them.

The spell confers no ability to command beasts. If the caster asks the summoned beasts to perform some task, they consider it and may agree. This is a TN 10 Persuade (Charm) test. The beasts should be considered friendly, adding a +5 test result bonus to the caster's roll. However, if the caster does not have a means of speaking with the beasts, he may suffer a –15 penalty for speaking a different language, depending on the complexity of the request. An attempt to guide the beasts with hand signals, for instance, would not incur this penalty.

BLADE PRESERVATION

CASTING TIME: 5 minutes
RANGE: Touch
DURATION: 50 years per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 5
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard, Runes, Song
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: Casters use this spell to preserve swords and daggers, keeping them from becoming dull, rusted, pitted, or weakened by the passage of time. A weapon under the protection of *Blade Preservation* can still be damaged or harmed directly, but it remains untouched by the wear of years.

This spell affects one blade per casting. The spellcaster may double the number of blades affected at once for each +2 to the Weariness TN. At the Narrator's option, the caster can use this spell to protect other metallic items no larger than a sword's blade.

BLADESHATTERING [SORCERY]

CASTING TIME: 1
RANGE: 10 yards
DURATION: Instant
WEARINESS TN: 8
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard, Ability
SPECIALTY: Sorcery

EFFECT: This spell allows a sorcerer to cause one blade—a dagger, axe, or sword—to shatter or melt into smoke. This causes no harm to the person holding the blade, but it does deprive him of a weapon.

BLAST OF SORCERY [SORCERY]

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: 10 yards per point of Bearing
DURATION: Instant
WEARINESS TN: 12
COST: 2 spell picks
METHOD: Standard, Song
SPECIALTY: Sorcery

EFFECT: The caster fires a blast of sorcerous power at a foe, hurting or slaying him. After succeeding with his Stamina test, the sorcerer makes an attack roll—using Ranged Combat or straight Nimbleness—against a TN equal to 10 + the target's Nimbleness modifier. Shields provide no defence to the target, but sturdier forms of cover (stone walls, boulders, or the like) may grant him a cover bonus (see the Armour and Cover Protection Table, page 232). If the blast hits the target, it takes 5d6+5 damage. Normal rules for extra successes on attack tests apply.

BLINDING FLASH

CASTING TIME: 1
RANGE: 5 yards per point of Bearing
DURATION: Instant
WEARINESS TN: 10
COST: 1 spell pick, plus see text
REQUISITE: *Create Light*
METHOD: Standard, Song
SPECIALTY: Fire

EFFECT: This spell creates a bright flash of light to blind one of the caster's foes. If the caster succeeds with his Stamina test, he blinds the target for 1d6+1 rounds. The target may make a Swiftness test against TN 12 to reduce the duration of the blindness by half, rounding up. If successful, the target blinked or turned his head away in time to avoid the full effects. While blind, a character suffers a –5 test result penalty to attacks and all other actions requiring sight, just as if he were in total darkness. The Narrator may impose other penalties or even forbid certain actions as seems appropriate.

The basic spell, which blinds one person, costs one pick. For a second pick, the spellcaster can expand the spell's power, causing the flash to cover an area with a five-foot diameter and blind everyone within that area, both friend and foe. Each additional pick doubles the radius of the area: 10 feet for the third pick, 20 feet for four picks, and so forth. Each target within the radius can still make a Swiftness test to halve the duration.

BREAK BINDING

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: 10 feet
DURATION: Instant
WEARINESS TN: 8
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: With this spell, the caster can dispel the effects of a single casting of the *Holding-spell* or *Spellbinding*, freeing those trapped by the magic. If the spellcaster who cast the *Holding-spell* or *Spellbinding* is present when he tries this and wishes to stop him, the two spellcasters must engage in an opposed Willpower test to see whose magic prevails.

BURNING SPARKS

CASTING TIME: 1
RANGE: 10 feet
DURATION: Instant
WEARINESS TN: 8
COST: 1 spell pick
REQUISITE: *Kindle Fire*
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: Fire

EFFECT: With this spell, the caster can cause an existing fire to flare, casting deadly, burning sparks at those near it. Anyone within 10 feet of the fire may suffer injury, but the spellcaster can decide to hurt some while sparing others.

The damage caused by *Burning Sparks* depends on the size of the fire the caster uses for it. See the accompanying table for details. Anyone affected by the spell may reduce the damage sustained by half by succeeding with a TN 10 Swiftness test.

Except for with candle flames, this spell does not extinguish the fire used to fuel it.

TABLE 7.2: BURNING SPARKS DAMAGE

FIRE SIZE	DAMAGE
Candle 1	(to only one person)
Torch	1/2d6
Campfire	1d6
Small bonfire	2d6
Large bonfire	4d6

CALLING

CASTING TIME: See text
RANGE: See text
DURATION: See text
WEARINESS TN: 10
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: With this spell, the caster can grant to another person the ability to call upon him, even over long distances, and seek his aid. The caster casts the spell by explaining to the other person how to call to him. This takes at least a minute and requires the caster to make the usual test to resist Weariness.

The call has to involve speech or sound of some sort, but it could be a simple rhyme or song, the caster's name uttered with particular inflection and force, or a complex incantation. At a minimum, the call must take two actions to use, and it may take longer.

The person taught the call remembers it forever after, unless stronger magic takes away his memory of it. When he uses it, the caster hears it, knows who is calling him, and knows that person is in peril—and roughly what type of peril—regardless of how far away he is. Of course, distance may affect the caster's ability to respond to the call for help in time. This spell grants no ability to travel quickly.

CHANGE HUE

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: Self
DURATION: 10 minutes per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 8
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard, Ability
SPECIALTY: Beasts

EFFECT: With this spell, a caster can alter the colour of his skin, hair, eyes, and clothes. Within the duration of the spell, he may change the hues of any or all of these things as often as he wishes, as a free action. Proper changes of colour can help a character to hide in wild areas, providing a bonus of up to +5 to appropriate Stealth (Hide) tests.

COMMAND [SORCERY]

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: 10 yards
DURATION: 1 hour per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 15
COST: 3 spell picks
REQUISITES: Willpower +4 or greater, *Voice of Command*
METHOD: Standard, Song, Ability
SPECIALTY: Sorcery

EFFECT: This dreadful spell, the most vile and evil known to sorcerers, allows the caster to overwhelm the will of another, dominating his mind and forcing him to do the caster's bidding. The effect may seem gentle—words of kindly advice from one offerspeeches from a great and noble leader—but the effect is nothing less than the ultimate power of the Shadow.

If the caster succeeds with his Stamina test, he engages in an opposed Willpower test against the target. He receives a +10 test result bonus to his roll. If he wins the test, for the duration of the spell the target must do as the caster says, even if carrying out the orders given could cause the target harm. If the caster loses the opposed test, the target, through strength of will and conviction, shakes off the spell and may control his own actions.

Note that this spell differs from *Voice of Command* and *Word of Command*.

CRAFTING-SPELL

CASTING TIME: 5 minutes
RANGE: Touch
DURATION: See text
WEARINESS TN: 12
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard, Runes, Song
SPECIALTY: None

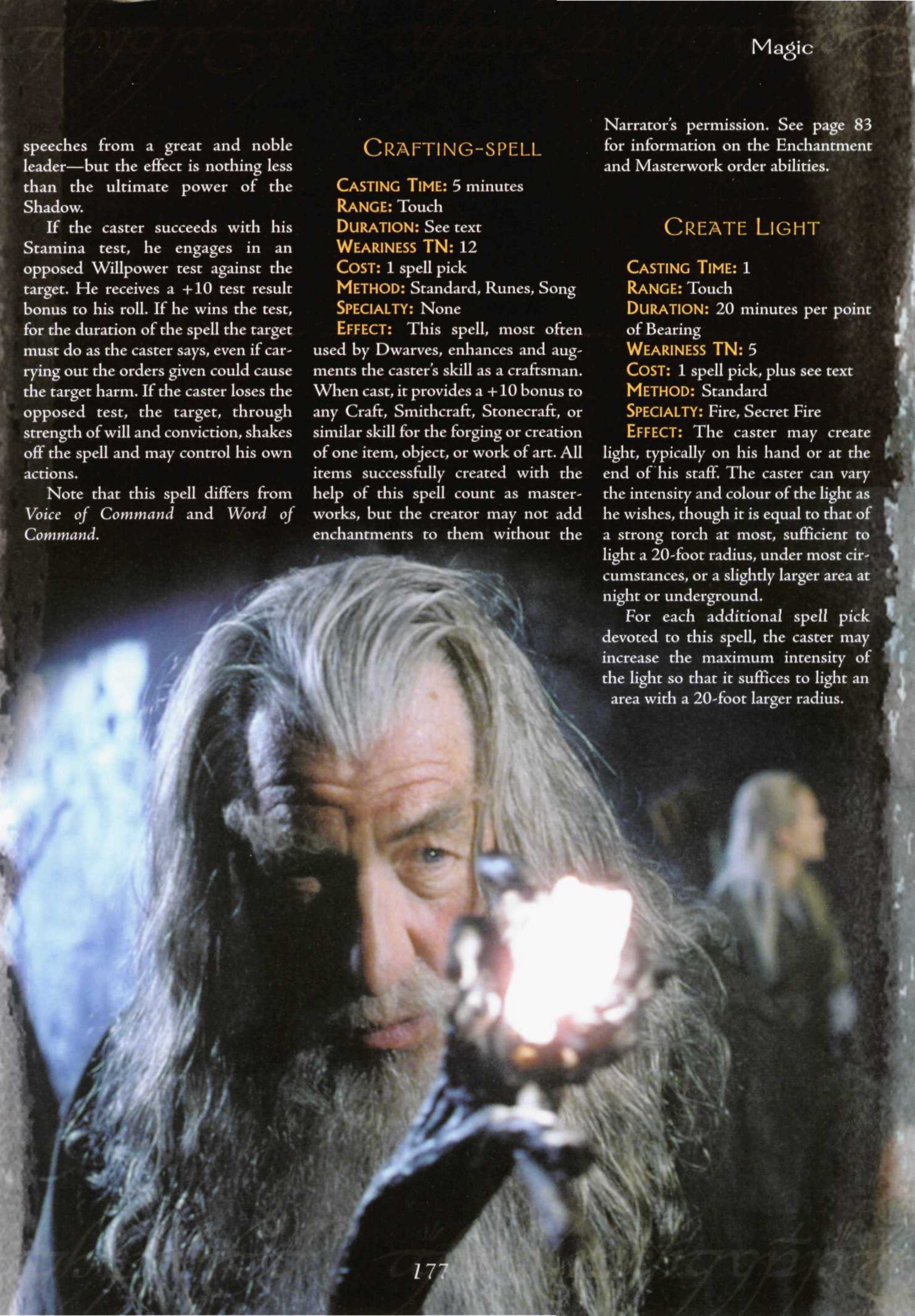
EFFECT: This spell, most often used by Dwarves, enhances and augments the caster's skill as a craftsman. When cast, it provides a +10 bonus to any Craft, Smithcraft, Stonecraft, or similar skill for the forging or creation of one item, object, or work of art. All items successfully created with the help of this spell count as masterworks, but the creator may not add enchantments to them without the Narrator's permission. See page 83 for information on the Enchantment and Masterwork order abilities.

CREATE LIGHT

CASTING TIME: 1
RANGE: Touch
DURATION: 20 minutes per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 5
COST: 1 spell pick, plus see text
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: Fire, Secret Fire

EFFECT: The caster may create light, typically on his hand or at the end of his staff. The caster can vary the intensity and colour of the light as he wishes, though it is equal to that of a strong torch at most, sufficient to light a 20-foot radius, under most circumstances, or a slightly larger area at night or underground.

For each additional spell pick devoted to this spell, the caster may increase the maximum intensity of the light so that it suffices to light an area with a 20-foot larger radius.



Display of Power

Casting Time: 1
Range: Self (see text)
Duration: 1 round
Weariness TN: 10
Cost: 2 spell picks
Requisites: Any five other spells
Method: Standard, Song, Ability
Specialty: None

Effect: With this spell, a caster summons forth his power, displaying it in ways that all can see and none can mistake. The effects depend upon the situation and his mood. Thunder and lightning may flash from his staff, fire may fill him, or a great light may surround him. Many effects are possible. Whatever the appearance of the spell, it grants him a +10 bonus to Inspire and Intimidate tests made that round, and half that bonus for tests made in the following 1d6+1 rounds. The bonus is only effective when working with—or against—those able to witness the *Display of Power*.

Dumbness [Sorcery]

Casting Time: 1
Range: 10 feet per point of Bearing
Duration: 1 minute per point of Bearing
Weariness TN: 8
Cost: 1 spell pick
Method: Standard, Song
Specialty: Sorcery

Effect: This spell strikes a victim dumb. For one minute per point of Bearing the caster possesses, the victim cannot speak, though he may find ways to communicate with gestures or writing. If the victim succeeds with a TN 15 Willpower test, the spell has no effect on him.

Enhance Food

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Touch
Duration: See text
Weariness TN: 5
Cost: 1 spell pick
Method: Standard, Ability
Specialty: None

Effect: This spell, a favourite of many travelling casters, improves the taste and quality of food. Alternately, the caster can reverse the effects to ruin food: sour ale, curdle milk, spoil meat, and so on.

When souring or ruining food, the spell's effects take place at once and are permanent. When improving food, the duration lasts as long as the food would naturally last. For example, if cast on a meal, it lasts until the food spoils naturally: a day or two at best, in most situations. If cast on beer, the beer remains improved until allowed to go stale, perhaps for up to a year if it remains in its kegs.

Enslave Beast [Sorcery]

Casting Time: 2
Range: 5 feet per point of Bearing
Duration: 1 day per point of Bearing
Weariness TN: 10
Cost: 1 spell pick
Requisite: *Beast Speech* or *Beast Summoning*
Method: Standard, Song
Specialty: Beasts, Sorcery

Effect: This spell allows the caster to enslave a single Large animal (such as a *mûmak*, bear, or horse), 1d6+1 Medium animals (for example, wolves, dogs, or hunting cats), or up to 50 Small or smaller animals (such as bats, birds, or rats). The animals can understand his commands and must follow them regardless of the danger to themselves.\

Evoke Awe

Casting Time: 1
Range: See text
Duration: 1 round per point of Bearing
Weariness TN: 10
Cost: 1 spell pick
Requisite: Bearing 8+
Method: Standard
Specialty: Secret Fire

Effect: This spell functions identically to *Evoke Fear*, but it is not a form of sorcery. It grants the caster the skill Intimidate (Power or Majesty) +8. If he already knows the chosen skill, the spell instead provides a +8 test result bonus to all attempts to use the skill with the Power or Majesty specialties.

This spell only works to inspire awe and dread in those who serve the Shadow and are confronted by the caster. At the Narrator's option, it may apply in some situations in which a hero needs to awe those whom he wishes to recruit as allies, such as when Gandalf spoke to Théoden at Meduseld and broke Wormtongue's hold over him.

If appropriate, the subtle magic of Middle-earth may reflect the use of this spell. A shaft of light may break through the clouds and fall on the caster, a warm breeze rolls in from the West, or the like.

Evoke Fear [Sorcery]

Casting Time: 1
Range: See text
Duration: 1 round per point of Bearing
Weariness TN: 10
Cost: 1 spell pick
Method: Standard, Ability
Specialty: Sorcery

Effect: This dreadful spell of sorcery inspires terror within the hearts of anyone the spellcaster confronts. It grants the caster the skill Intimidate (Fear) +8. If he already knows that skill, it instead provides a +8 test result bonus to *all* attempts to use it to create fear.

If appropriate, the subtle magic of Middle-earth may reflect the use of this spell. Storm clouds gather and thunder rumbles, a cold wind blows out of the East, or the like.

EXCLUSION

Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: Touch
Duration: 1 year per point of Bearing
Weariness TN: 12
Cost: 2 spell picks
Method: Standard, Runes
Specialty: None

Effect: This spell, a favourite of the Dwarves—who use it to protect their halls and their treasures—works a prohibition and exclusion upon those the caster does not wish to enter an area, go through a door, or open a lock. The caster places the spell upon the area, door, or thing he wishes to protect, and he defines who may enter or open it. Possible definitions include 'no one,' 'anyone who has received my permission,' 'any *Elf*,' or the like. The definition must be such that anyone (primarily the Narrator) can easily determine who does and does not qualify.

The spell cannot be used as a backhanded way of detecting things the average person ordinarily could not. For example, the caster cannot define the spell by stating: 'Anyone who does not serve the Shadow may enter freely.' Since the average person cannot quickly or easily determine whether someone serves the Shadow, the exclusion is too vague.

The effects of a prohibition and exclusion are twofold. First, any tests required to enter or open the area suffer a −10 penalty. Second, anyone who knowingly violates the prohibition comes under the effects of a curse. The caster defines the curse, but the Narrator must approve it. See 'Oaths and Curses,' page 164, for more information on curses. Since the curse only takes effect if someone knowingly violates the spell, casters usually leave a message proclaiming it. For example, if a caster cast *Exclusion* on the door to a crypt, he might inscribe a warning on the door: 'Those who enter here shall suffer the curse of the dead for disturbing their rest.'

FARSEEING

Casting Time: 5 minutes
Range: See text
Duration: 1 minute per point of Bearing
Weariness TN: 15
Cost: 2 spell picks
Requisite: Perception 10+
Method: Standard, Song
Specialty: None

Effect: With this potent spell, a caster can see places far away. To cast it, he needs a reflective surface—a pool of calm water or a mirror, for example. If he succeeds with his Stamina test, he can see any location within 100 miles that he can specify by name or a reasonable description. He cannot focus his farsight on a specific person or object, only on a place, nor may he attempt to scry 'the area where so-and-so is right now.' The spell only grants sight of the designated area. The caster cannot hear spo-

ken words or other sounds from there, and cannot penetrate darkness.

For each additional spell pick devoted to this spell, double the distance of the caster's farsight: 200 miles for the third pick, 400 miles for the fourth, and so on.

Farspeaking

Casting Time: 2
Range: 1 mile per point of Bearing
Duration: Concentration
Weariness TN: 9
Cost: 1 spell pick
Method: Standard
Specialty: None

Effect: With this spell, a caster can cause his voice to issue from an object, such as a mirror or a stone. The object must be within one mile per point of Bearing he possesses, and he must have seen it before, either with his own eyes, or via *Farseeing*. The object repeats his speech as he speaks it. It does not speak on its own and cannot be 'programmed' to talk when a given condition arises. The caster can cast *Voice of Suasion* or *Voice of Command* through this spell if desired, though his inability to see the people to whom he's speaking may hinder him in that regard.

Fiery Missile

Casting Time: 1
Range: See text
Duration: See text
Weariness TN: 7
Cost: 1 spell pick
Requisite: *Kindle Fire*
Method: Standard
Specialty: Fire

Effect: This spell grants a caster the power to make small flammable objects, such as pinecones or small branches, burst into flame so that he can throw them at his enemies as burning missiles. He can create up to one missile per point of Bearing, with any colour flame he desires. They burn for up to one minute per point of Bearing, and they each shed the light of a candle. If not used before the spell expires, the objects simply burn to ashes.

Throwing each missile counts as one action. The missiles have a range of 3/8/15/25/+5. The caster uses his Nimbleness or Ranged Combat to determine if he hits. A hit causes 1d6+1 damage and may set clothes, fur, or other flammables on fire. Treat it as a torch for these purposes. See 'Fire' on page 245 for details.

Finding and Returning

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Touch
Duration: 1 month per point of Bearing
Weariness TN: 10
Cost: 1 spell pick
Method: Standard, Runes
Specialty: None

Effect: This spell protects travellers, making it more likely that they can find their way to their destination and then return, safe and unhindered. It grants to the recipient the virtue of the Travel-sense edge, though he must make a TN 5 Wits test to use it. Additionally, he receives a +2 bonus on all tests to overcome the obstacles of the road: to climb cliffs, ford rivers, run or hide from pursuers, and the like. It never grants a bonus to attacks, dodging, or the like, however. The Narrator decides what constitutes an 'obstacle of the road' for purposes of this spell.

If cast on an animal, such as a horse, this spell is sometimes known as 'words of guiding.'

Fireshaping

Casting Time: 1
Range: 1 foot per point of Bearing
Duration: Concentration
Weariness TN: 5 (see text)
Cost: 1 spell pick
Requisite: *Kindle Flame*
Method: Standard
Specialty: Fire

Effect: Casters use this spell to shape fire, creating pleasing images of flame. The listed Weariness TN assumes the flame is no larger than a torch. Increase it to 6 for a campfire, 7 for a small bonfire, and 9 for a large bonfire.

For the most part, Fireshaping is cast simply for idle amusement or distraction. However, in appropriate circumstances, it may grant a small bonus (no more than +2) to Inspire, Intimidate, or Bearing tests.

Flame of Anor

Casting Time: 2
Range: 20 feet per point of Bearing
Duration: Instant
Weariness TN: 10
Cost: 2 spell picks
Requisite: Character may not know any sorcery spells
Method: Standard
Specialty: Secret Fire

Effect: This spell, one of the most powerful weapons the Wise have against the Shadow, projects a bolt of white light bright enough to pierce any gloom. The beam harms the servants of the Enemy—ranging from Nazgûl to Orcs—and other evil creatures as well. The caster must make a Ranged Combat or Nimbleness test to hit a target with it, and the target can attempt to dodge. If the beam strikes a target, the target takes 5d6+5 points of damage. A disastrous failure may hit nearby targets, whether friend or foe.

FOG-RAISING

CASTING TIME: 1 minute
RANGE: 50 feet per point of Bearing
DURATION: See text
WEARINESS TN: 8
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard, Song
SPECIALTY: Air, Water

EFFECT: This spell allows a caster to create a thick bank of fog. The natural conditions must be right for fog: there must be a source of water, the proper temperature, and so forth. Not even the most powerful spellcaster can create fog out of nothing on a warm, sunny day.

The cloud of fog created by this spell can have a radius of up to 30 feet times the caster's Bearing. Once created, it lasts until the caster stops concentrating or natural conditions remove it, whichever comes first. It counts as 'dense fog' for purposes of determining physical test modifiers (see page 218). The fog moves normally, according to the wind and lay of the land. The caster has no control over its movement once he creates it.

FOG-WEAVING

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: 20 feet per point of Bearing
DURATION: 1 minute per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 9
COST: 1 spell pick
REQUISITE: *Fog-raising*
METHOD: Standard, Song
SPECIALTY: Air, Water

EFFECT: With this spell, a caster can shape fogs and mists, whether natural ones or ones he creates with *Fog-weaving.* He can form phantoms of men, dragons and fell beasts, or wondrous tableaus out of the fog. Ordinarily this is done simply for amusement or to distract enemies, but in appropriate circumstances it may provide a small bonus (typically +1 or +2) to Intimidate tests.

FORGETFULNESS [SORCERY]

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: 5 feet per point of Bearing
DURATION: 1 week per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 12
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard, Song, Ability
SPECIALTY: Sorcery

EFFECT: This foul spell allows a sorcerer to cloud a person's memories with darkness, preventing the target from recalling who he is, where he lives, who he knows, or anything else of use. If the caster succeeds with his Stamina test, he must engage in an opposed Willpower test against the target. The caster receives a +5 bonus to the test. If the caster wins, the spell takes effect. If he achieves an extraordinary success, the victim cannot even remember how to speak or walk for 1d6 days and suffers a –5 penalty to all Perception and Observe tests.

A victim of this spell can be taught his skills again through normal teaching and training, and he can even learn new skills. However, he cannot remember his name, where he comes from, or anyone he knows until the spell ends.

Once the spell ends, newly learned skills remain. For skills that have been relearned, use the higher of the victim's skill ranks from before and after the spell took effect.

GUARDING-SPELL

CASTING TIME: 1 minute
RANGE: Touch
DURATION: 1 minute per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 12
COST: 2 spell picks
METHOD: Standard, Runes
SPECIALTY: None
EFFECT: This spell makes the caster, or any upon whom he confers its virtues, more difficult to hurt and injure. All tests to hit him in combat suffer a –3 penalty. Furthermore, any Courage he spends to enhance attempts to dodge, block, parry or otherwise protect himself grants a +5 bonus, instead of the normal +3.

HEALING-SPELL

CASTING TIME: 1 minute
RANGE: Touch
DURATION: See text
WEARINESS TN: 10
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: Secret Fire
EFFECT: This spell grants a caster the power to heal injuries, illness, and other harms of the body. When he casts it, he gains the skill Healing +8 and can apply it using the standard rules (see page 244). If he already has Healing, he gains a +8 test result bonus for it. In either case, the spell's effects last long enough to treat one person for a major wound, illness, or similar condition—a person Near Death, for instance. It could be used to treat two Incapacitated people, four Wounded people, eight Injured people, or 16 Dazed people—or some similar combination thereof—instead.

HOLDING-SPELL [SORCERY]

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: 10 feet per point of Bearing
DURATION: 1 round per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 12
COST: 2 spell picks
REQUISITES: *Evoke Fear, Spellbinding*
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: Sorcery
EFFECT: With this spell, a sorcerer can paralyze another person, using great fear and terror to freeze him in place so that he cannot move or flee. If the caster succeeds with his Stamina test, he and the victim must engage in an opposed Willpower test, in which the caster receives a +5 test result bonus. If the caster wins, the victim remains paralyzed for the duration of the spell, unable to defend himself or run. Otherwise, the spell has no effect.

For one additional spell pick, a sorcerer can affect multiple targets with this spell. The maximum number of persons he can affect equals his Bearing divided by three, and all victims must be within a certain range of each other: twice the caster's Bearing in feet

IMITATION-SPELL

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: 3 feet per point of Bearing
DURATION: Concentration
WEARINESS TN: 8
COST: 1 spell pick
REQUISITE: Mimicry 4+
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: None
EFFECT: This spell enhances a caster's ability to imitate the voices of others, granting a +8 bonus to Mimicry tests for that purpose. Furthermore, it allows the caster to imitate two voices at once, so that some listeners hear one voice and other listeners hear another.

ITHILDIN-FIRE

CASTING TIME: 1 minute
RANGE: Touch
DURATION: Concentration *or* 10 minutes per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 5
COST: 1 spell pick
REQUISITE: *Create Light*
METHOD: Standard, Ability
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: This spell activates *ithildin*, a magical, metallic substance Elves make of *mithril*. It mirrors only starlight and moonlight, and it sleeps until touched by one who knows this spell. Until activated, *ithildin* remains invisible, and if activated in sunlight seems only like faint lines of tracery. Only at dusk and night is its true silvery beauty revealed. This is the material from which the outlines of the door the Fellowship uses to get into Moria was made.

KINDLE FIRE

CASTING TIME: 1
RANGE: Touch
DURATION: Until flames burn out naturally or are put out
WEARINESS TN: 5
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: Fire

EFFECT: By touching some readily flammable object—typically a bit of kindling or stick of wood—the caster can cause it to burst into flame, even if it's wet. Living flesh does not count as 'readily flammable,' but at the Narrator's discretion hair, fur, or clothing may. Once kindled, the fire burns normally and can be quenched normally.

For an additional spell pick, a spellcaster can make this spell function at a range of up to three feet per point of Bearing. If he uses it as an attack—to set a wolf's fur on fire, for example—he must succeed with a Ranged Combat attack test, and the target can avoid the effects by making an opposed Swiftness test. For a third spell pick, a spellcaster can affect multiple objects: up to one readily flammable object per point of Bearing he possesses. All objects kindled must be within a certain range of each other: twice the caster's Bearing in feet.

LIGHTNING

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: 5 feet per point of Bearing
DURATION: Instant
WEARINESS TN: 12
COST: 1 spell pick
REQUISITE: Create Light
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: Air

EFFECT: From his hand or staff, the spellcaster looses a blast of lightning powerful enough to slay even mighty warriors. No Ranged Attack test is required. The bolt hits automatically and does 4d6 damage to its target. The target can reduce the damage by half if he succeeds with a TN 15 Swiftness test.

MASTERY OF SHAPES

CASTING TIME: 1 minute
RANGE: Self
DURATION: 1 hour per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 10
COST: 2 spell picks
REQUISITE: *Change Hue*
METHOD: Standard, Ability
SPECIALTY: Beasts

EFFECT: A caster who knows this spell can change his shape to that of any normal bird or beast, but not a fell beast or being—such as a Warg, Balrog, or dragon—nor into a unique or specific creature. When the caster changes form, he retains his Wits, Willpower, and Wisdom, but he now has the other attributes of the creature. He retains the use of all skills he knows, though a lack of hands or other faculties may prevent him from using them. He may change back to his normal shape at any time, ending the spell. He may not shift from one animal to another. He must first change back to his normal form and then cast the spell again.

When a spellcaster changes form, all items and objects he wears or carries disappear, becoming part of his new form. These return once he resumes his normal shape. However, at the Narrator's discretion, certain unique and powerful items (Rings of Power, for example) do *not* disappear and must be carried by the caster in his new form.

When bought as an ability, this spell grants a character the power to assume a single animal form (such as a bear or a wolf) whenever he likes. He still requires one minute to change shape.

For two extra spell picks, a caster can change the shapes of other persons by touching them. The subject must wish to change form. The caster cannot use this as an attack to force someone into another shape. That requires *Transformation* (see below).

For one extra spell pick, the caster can assume the form of other folk—change himself into a Hobbit or an Orc, for example. If he does this, what he wears and carries remains on him. This spell does not allow him to imitate the features of another specific person with any precision however.

Dark rumours whispered among spellcasters, and cryptic passages in certain scrolls and books, claim a sorcerous version of this spell allows the caster to assume the forms of fell beasts and monstrous creatures, even that of dragons and their kin.

MIND-SPEECH

CASTING TIME: 1 minute
RANGE: 1 foot per point of Bearing
DURATION: Concentration
WEARINESS TN: 10
COST: 1 spell picks
REQUISITE: *Spoken Thoughts*
METHOD: Standard, Ability
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: This spell grants to a caster the power to talk to another person without speech, communicating directly from mind to mind. It only works with other persons who also know this spell or have it as a magical ability. Communication takes place at the rate of normal speech, and all persons involved in the conversation must maintain line of sight.

MISDIRECTION

CASTING TIME: 1 minute
RANGE: See text
DURATION: 1 hour per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 12
COST: 2 spell picks
REQUISITE: *Finding and Returning*
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: This spell sets a web of enchantment about an area, causing those who enter it to become confused and lost or even to draw closer to the spellcaster, regardless of their wishes.

Misdirection affects an area around the spellcaster with a maximum radius of half a mile per point of Bearing he possesses. While the spell remains in effect, the caster automatically knows of every Dwarf, Elf, Hobbit, Man, Orc, Troll, or other thinking being—not including intelligent animals—who enters the area, and he may choose whether or not to affect them with the spell's magic. Affected people lose all sense of direction. Skills and edges such as Survival and Travel-sense are of no avail. Even if the subjects think they have chosen the proper direction—by following the setting sun, for example—in fact they have not.

Once per hour, victims may engage in an opposed Wisdom test with the spellcaster. If the spellcaster wins, for that hour he may direct the victim toward him or toward any other person or place within the affected area, at his discretion. If the victim wins, for that hour he is free of the spell's effect and may determine directions normally.

MIST OF SPEED

CASTING TIME: 1 hour
RANGE: 10 miles per point of Bearing
DURATION: 1 hour per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 12
COST: 3 spell picks
REQUISITES: *Fograising, Fogweaving*
METHOD: Standard, Song
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: This spell, a working of great power, creates a cloud of thick, white mist. The cloud covers an area with a radius of up to 100 feet times the caster's Bearing, centred upon a person, object, or point of the caster's choosing. While within the cloud, riders and horses alike can ride nonstop at full speed, without becoming any more tired than they would when travelling at normal speeds over the same period of time. Moreover, their passage makes no noise, and no one outside the cloud can see those within, not even with *Farseeing*. If the centre point of the cloud is mobile, the cloud moves with it.

NAMING

CASTING TIME: 1 minute
RANGE: Touch
DURATION: Permanent
WEARINESS TN: 8
COST: 1 spell pick
REQUISITE: *Beast Speech*
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: Beasts

EFFECT: With this spell, a caster can give a name to any domesticated beast, such as a horse, cow, or dog. For the rest of its life, the animal answers to the name, clearly understanding it whenever anyone uses it. It also becomes more likely to understand and obey commands, provided the person uttering the commands treats it kindly. Treat the animal as devoted to those who know its name and treat it well. This adds the standard +10 social test modifier to any Persuade (Charm) tests made with the animal.

OPENING-SPELL

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: Touch
DURATION: Instant
WEARINESS TN: 7
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: This spell allows a caster to open locked doors, whether they are held by magic or simple, mundane latches. The spell opens any normal lock automatically, even if the caster does not possess the key.

Magically sealed locks often prove harder to open however. The Narrator assigns a difficulty to the lock, usually equal to the Willpower test result of the person who cast the *Shutting-spell* (see below). The caster of the *Opening-spell* then makes a Willpower test. If he equals or exceeds the TN, the door opens.

Some doors have been magically sealed with even more powerful enchantments worked into their structure. The TN for the Willpower test to open these can run as high as 30 or more.

QUENCH FIRE

CASTING TIME: 1
RANGE: 5 yards per point of Bearing
DURATION: Instant
WEARINESS TN: See text
COST: 1 spell pick
REQUISITE: *Kindle Fire*
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: Fire

EFFECT: With this spell a caster can extinguish fires large and small. The TN for the Stamina test depends on the size of the fire the spellcaster wishes to quench. See the accompanying table.

If the caster wishes, he can make a campfire or larger fire emit a huge gout of smoke of any colour he desires, when he quenches it. The smoke can fill an area with a maximum size of one cubic yard per point of Bearing the caster has. This counts as 'dense smoke' for purposes of calculating its effect on tests. See 'Physical Test Modifiers,' page 218.

TABLE 7.3: QUENCH FIRE DIFFICULTY

SIZE OF FIRE	WEARINESS TN
Candle	3
Torch	5
Campfire	7
Small bonfire	9
Large bonfire	12
Raging conflagration	15 or greater

POWER OF THE LAND

CASTING TIME: 3 full rounds
RANGE: 1 mile radius
DURATION: Concentration (maximum of one minute per point of Bearing)
WEARINESS TN: 12
COST: 3 spell picks
REQUISITES: Any six other Air, Beast, or Water spells
METHOD: Standard, Song
SPECIALTY: Air, Beasts, Water

EFFECT: This spell allows a caster to call upon the subtle magic of the land and cause it to rise up against his enemies. In effect, it duplicates the magician order ability Sanctum Power (page 90), but it applies to any area the caster is currently in. However, he must concentrate to maintain the effect, and he must make a new Stamina test every minute. When he fails a test, stops concentrating, or reaches the spell's maximum duration, the surrounding environment and weather quickly return to normal.

RAIN-WARD

CASTING TIME: 1
RANGE: Self
DURATION: Concentration
WEARINESS TN: 5
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: Air, Water

EFFECT: This minor spell gives great comfort to travelling spellcasters, granting the caster the ability to keep himself from getting wet in the rain. It doesn't alter the weather or stop the rain from falling, but somehow no raindrops hit the caster, no matter how strong the storm. Unfortunately, the spell does not protect the wizard from stepping in puddles. It also only protects the caster himself.

READING THE HEART

CASTING TIME: 1 minute
RANGE: 10 feet
DURATION: Instant
WEARINESS TN: 9
COST: 1 spell pick
REQUISITES: Wisdom +4 or greater, Insight 8+
METHOD: Standard, Ability
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: This spell allows a magician to gaze into the eyes of another person and read what lies within his heart: his hopes, dreams, fears, worries, loves, hates, and temptations. The Wise use this power to find the ills that lie within a person's soul, that they might be alleviated or cured. Sorcerers sometimes learn it to better torment their victims with the knowledge gained.

RESIST FEAR

CASTING TIME: 1
RANGE: Self
DURATION: 1 round per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 8
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard, Ability
SPECIALTY: Secret Fire

EFFECT: As the servants of the Shadow can cause fear and dread, so can the spellcasters of the West counter it. This spell strengthens hearts and banishes terror, allowing those affected to stand and face their foes. The caster may use it in one of two ways. First, it can provide a +8 bonus to his Inspire tests to help others resist fear. Second, he can provide all friendly or allied people—within 2 feet per point of Bearing he possesses—with a +5 bonus on all Willpower tests to withstand terror. This last effect includes himself.

RUIN [SORCERY]

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: Touch
DURATION: 1 round per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 12
COST: 2 spell picks
REQUISITE: *Shatter*
METHOD: Standard, Runes
SPECIALTY: Sorcery

EFFECT: This spell of sorcery enhances the destructive effects of siege engines, weapons, and the like. A siege engine with a spell of *Ruin* cast upon it does +1d6 damage. A melee weapon enhanced by *Ruin* does +1 point of damage. Multiple spells of *Ruin* upon a single weapon have no effect. Only one *Ruin* spell can be cast upon an individual weapon at any given time.

SCRIBE MOON-LETTERS

CASTING TIME: 1 minute per 10 letters
RANGE: Self
DURATION: Permanent
WEARINESS TN: 7
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard, Runes, Ability
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: A caster who knows this spell can scribe moon-letters, a magical way of writing invented long ago by the Dwarves. Some moon-letters can only be read when the paper they are written on is held up to the moon, so that moonlight shines through it. More clever types can only be read when the moon shines behind them on the same day of the year or when the moon is of the same phase: crescent, full, gibbous, waning.

A caster who knows this spell can detect, with a TN 10 Perception test, when a piece of paper has moon-letters written on it, but he cannot see or read them unless the conditions are right.

SENSE POWER

CASTING TIME: 1
RANGE: 10 feet per point of Bearing
DURATION: 1 minute
WEARINESS TN: 5
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard, Ability
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: With this spell, a spellcaster can perceive the power possessed by another. While the spell is active, he may make an Observe (*Sense Power*) test or a Perception test to detect the presence and power of another spellcaster, a creature of supernatural power, the subtle magic in an area, or the like. The TN for the test depends upon the level of power displayed. See the accompanying table.

Note that merely being an Elf or an Elf-friend confers upon someone power sufficient for this spell to detect or sense. At the Narrator's discretion, no test may be needed to perceive sufficiently strong, obvious, or apparent sources of power.

This spell simply allows the caster to determine the presence of power, not its precise location. In many cases, the precise location is obvious, but the caster cannot use *Sense Power* to, for example, locate and target another spellcaster in a darkened chamber.

In addition to simply detecting the presence of power, the caster can also determine the nature of the power in question. The power of the Wise—or power used for good and noble ends—feels different from the power used by the servants of Sauron.

For each additional spell pick devoted to this spell, a caster gains a +3 bonus on all Observe (*Sense Power*) or Perception tests associated with this spell.

SHADOW OF FEAR [SORCERY]

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: See text
DURATION: See text
WEARINESS TN: 12
COST: 1 spell pick
REQUISITES: Bearing 12+, Intimidate 10+, *Evoke Fear*
METHOD: Standard, Ability
SPECIALTY: Sorcery

EFFECT: This dreadful spell ends a caster's ability to control

TABLE 7.4: SENSE POWER DIFFICULTY

TN	POWER
5	**VERY STRONG POWER:** Saruman, Gandalf, Elrond, a Balrog.
10	**STRONG POWER:** A typical wizard, a Noldorin magician, a dragon, a powerful enchanted item (Ring of Power, *palantír*).
15	**AVERAGE POWER:** A typical travelling magician, a typical enchanted item, a typical Noldorin Elf, an Elf-friend.
20	**WEAK POWER:** A loremaster who knows one or two spells, a minstrel with the Weaving Words ability, a typical Grey or Silvan Elf.

others with terror. It has two possible effects. First, it allows the use of *Evoke Fear* against targets normally too far away or too sheltered to feel the effects of that spell. It extends the range of *Evoke Fear* to 100 feet per point of Bearing, and it lets it inflict fear upon targets regardless of whether the spellcaster can see them or is aware of them. This form of the spell has a duration equal to the duration of the *Evoke Fear* spell with which it is used. When the *Evoke Fear* spell ends, so does the *Shadow of Fear* spell.

Second, the spell can extend the duration of the effects of *Evoke Fear* instead of its range. This version of the spell has a range of touch. Unlike most uses of Intimidate, which fade relatively quickly after the source of the terror leaves (see page 233), the *Shadow of Fear* remains as strong as when the spellcaster was present for one week per point of Bearing the spellcaster has. During this time, the victim receives no time-related bonuses to Willpower tests to shake off the fear. Thereafter the effects fade as normal.

SHADOWS AND PHANTOMS [SORCERY]

CASTING TIME: 1 minute
RANGE: See text
DURATION: 1 hour per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 10
COST: 1 spell pick
REQUISITE: *Wizard's Guise*
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: Sorcery

EFFECT: With this spell of deception and manipulation, a sorcerer can weave illusions: shadows and phantoms of magic to befool and tempt his enemies.

Sorcerers most often use this spell to create illusionary disguises for their servants. For these purposes, the spell functions just like *Wizard's Guise*, but it can affect persons other than the caster. The range for such a casting is touch. After the sorcerer creates the phantom, the person covered by it may go where he will without dispelling the image. Other persons who have reason to suspect that the person is not what he seems may make an opposed test to see through the disguise as normal for Guise.

Similarly, this spell can aid the spellcaster when he tries to hide. By weaving shadows and phantoms around himself, he can gain a +8 bonus to Stealth (Hide) tests. He must remain still, and the spell does not counteract or conceal any noise he might make. Someone searching for him can make the usual opposed test to find him.

Sorcerers can also create completely illusionary persons—often duplicates of themselves—to trick unwanted observers. These phantoms may speak and make other sounds as the sorcerer desires. Anyone observing such a phantom may make a Wisdom test to realize it is not real, but he must apply the sorcerer's Bearing modifier as a test result penalty. For example, if the Bearing modifier is+2, the penalty is –2.

A phantom created through this use of the spell must remain within 100 feet of the caster per point of Bearing the sorcerer possesses. If it goes beyond this range, it immediately vanishes like mist in morning sunlight.

Sorcerers can also change the appearance of the landscape with this spell. They can make a healthy forest seem dead and decayed, grasslands appear to be rocky wastes, and rivers and lakes desiccated or stagnant. This effect works over an area of 1,000 feet per point of Bearing the caster possesses, and it has a range of line of sight. In other words, the caster must be able to see the land he wishes to cover with his illusion. Observers may make TN 12 Wisdom tests to see through the phantasm, and anyone who actually enters the affected area immediately discovers the illusion.

The Narrator may, at her discretion, allow sorcerers to devise other uses for this spell. Regardless of how a spellcaster uses it, the phantoms created by this spell should always remain obvious to the touch, and they cannot directly cause damage or have other combat effects.

SHATTER

CASTING TIME: 1
RANGE: 5 feet per point of Bearing
Duration: Instant
WEARINESS TN: 8
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: This spell grants a caster the ability to shatter small objects of wood, glass, horn, stone, or like substances, but not metal. The object must not be so large or heavy that a strong man could not easily hold it in one hand. If someone is holding the object the caster wishes to shatter, the two must engage in an opposed Willpower test, with the caster receiving a +4 test result bonus. If the caster wins, the object shatters. Otherwise, it remains whole.

SHUTTING-SPELL

CASTING TIME: 1 minute
RANGE: Touch
DURATION: 1 hour per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 8
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard, Runes
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: With this spell, a caster can magically lock doors, preventing anyone from opening them. The door remains shut for the duration of the spell. Not even the proper key can open it. However, the caster can specify a command word that does open the door when anyone speaks it. Additionally, the door can still be broken by strength or with weapons. See the 'Protection and Structure Table' on page 242 for details on this.

When he casts this spell, a caster must make a TN 10 Willpower test. His test result becomes the Target Number for Willpower tests made by spellcasters using the *Opening-spell* to try to counteract his magic. If the test is failed, the spell fails as well.

Many *Shutting-spells* last for longer periods of time than the listed duration. For a –2 penalty to the Willpower test, the caster may change the spell's duration from hours to years. For a –4 penalty, he can improve it from hours to decades. For a –6 penalty, he can change it from hours to centuries.

The most powerful *Shutting-spells* also strengthen the doors they lock, making them more difficult to break down or chop through. For a –3 penalty to the Willpower test, the caster can increase the door's Protection and Structure by 5 each. For a –6 penalty, the caster can increase the door's Protection and Structure by 10 each instead.

To open any magically sealed door that has a codeword, a character must either know the codeword or make a Lore: Magic test to deduce it. The TN for the test varies from door to door, but it's usually 20 or more. Standard academic test modifiers apply. Such a test normally requires 1 hour.

SLUMBER

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: 5 feet per point of Bearing
DURATION: 1 hour per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 10
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard, Song
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: With this spell, a caster can place one person into a deep sleep from which they cannot awake on their own. Others can awaken the sleeping person in the usual ways: jostling them, shouting at them, splashing water on their faces, and the like. The spellcaster and the victim must make opposed Willpower tests, with the spellcaster receiving a +4 test result bonus. If the caster wins, the victim falls asleep. Otherwise, the victim remains awake and unaffected.

For every –3 penalty the spellcaster takes to his Weariness test, he receives an additional +1 to the opposed Willpower test.

SMOKE-WEAVING

CASTING TIME: 1
RANGE: 1 foot per point of Bearing
DURATION: Concentration
WEARINESS TN: 5
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: Fire

EFFECT: This simple spell, typically used to amuse others, allows a caster to control the colour, shape, and movement of smoke. With it, he can give smoke rings all the colours of the rainbow and set them to chasing one another, and he can craft dragons, sailing ships, and other shapes out of smoke. He cannot create smoke out of thin air, increase the amount of smoke present naturally, or make the smoke significantly thicker and denser than it already is.

This spell does have some practical uses. By causing smoke to gather around a person's head—which requires a Willpower test against a TN of 10 + target's Swiftness—a caster can blind and choke the subject, imposing a penalty of up to –2 on any test the victim makes for the duration of the spell. Or by changing the colour of the smoke from a campfire or larger fire based on a pre-arranged pattern, he could send elaborate messages via smoke signals.

SPELLBINDING

CASTING TIME: 1
RANGE: 5 feet per point of Bearing
DURATION: Concentration (maximum of 1 round per point of Bearing)
WEARINESS TN: 10
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: With this spell, a caster can temporarily bind another person's limbs, preventing him from moving or attacking, but not from talking. If the caster succeeds with his Stamina test, he and the victim must engage in an opposed Willpower test. If the caster wins, the victim becomes paralyzed and drops any objects carried in his hands. Otherwise, the spell has no effect.

A spellbinding lasts as long as the caster concentrates—to a maximum of one round per point of Bearing the caster has—or until he or anything else attacks or physically threatens the victim. If the caster stops concentrating or a physical threat arises, the victim is immediately freed.

For one additional spell pick, a caster can affect multiple targets with this spell. The maximum number of persons he can affect equals his Bearing divided by three, and all victims must be within his Bearing in feet of each other.

SPOKEN THOUGHTS

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: Self
DURATION: 1 hour per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 7
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard, Ability
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: A caster with this spell can overcome his ignorance of another's language, for it reveals to him the thoughts in the mind of another as expressed through that person's speech. For the duration of the spell, it is as if the spellcaster had 10 ranks in any language spoken to him. He cannot, however, read writing he has not learned normally, nor speak the language. All he can do is understand its spoken words.

For another spell pick, a caster can cast this spell on another person as well, allowing two-way speech. The range for such a casting is touch.

SPRINGTIME

CASTING TIME: 1 minute
RANGE: See text
DURATION: Concentration
WEARINESS TN: 12
COST: 1 spell pick
REQUISITE: *Power of the Land* or *Sanctum Power*
METHOD: Standard, Song, Ability
SPECIALTY: Secret Fire

EFFECT: This spell shatters the bonds of winter, bringing a brief touch of the beauteous weather of a fine spring day. Within an area around the caster—with a radius of 50 feet per point of the caster's Bearing—frozen waters instantly melt, the sun shines brightly, the temperature warms to that of spring, and flowers bloom. Within the area of *Springtime*, all characters other than the spellcaster recover lost Weariness Levels at twice the normal rate: one level per hour. The area affected does not move with the caster, and he can leave it without dispelling it, so long as he maintains his concentration.

SUNDERING

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: 5 feet per point of Bearing
DURATION: Instant
WEARINESS TN: 15
COST: 2 spell picks
REQUISITE: *Shatter*
METHOD: Standard, Song
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: This potent spell allows a caster to shatter and destroy large objects: towers, walls, bridges, and the like. The targeted object suffers 10 points of Structure damage per point of Bearing the caster possesses. The structure's Protection defends against this damage as normal. See the 'Protection and Structure Table,' page 242, regarding buildings' Structure points.

Although this spell functions at range, it is more effective if the caster actually touches the object he wishes to destroy, which may place him in danger of being hurt by the collapse. If he can touch the object, it suffers 12 points of Structure damage per point of Bearing the caster possesses.

The caster may increase the damage he does with Sundering by +1 point for every −1 penalty he takes to his Stamina roll.

TRANSFORMATION

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: 1 foot per point of Bearing
DURATION: Instant
WEARINESS TN: 15
COST: 3 spell picks
REQUISITES: Any 10 other spells
METHOD: Standard, Song
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: With this powerful spell, a caster can transform a living creature—typically a person—into another type of creature or an object. He cannot alter the creature's sentience. A deer turned into a man retains the mind of a deer, and a hobbit turned

into a frog remains as smart as he was before, although unable to speak intelligibly. Nor can the caster kill the victim by transforming him into an object. A man turned into a block of wood remains a living being. He is just unable to move.

The victim retains his Health and wound points, but he may become more or less vulnerable to attack as a result of the transformation. A man turned into a block of wood may be harder to hurt than normal—perhaps he gains some effective 'armour'—but one turned into a pile of parchment could be easily hurt by fire, water, or the like. The Narrator must carefully evaluate all uses of this spell, making sure that characters do not use it abusively or unbalancingly.

This spell is a favourite of sorcerers and other practitioners of the dark arts, who use it to torment helpless victims. The Wise and those allied with them use it rarely, if at all.

Veil

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Self
Duration: 1 hour per point of Bearing
Weariness TN: 10
Cost: 1 spell pick
Method: Standard, Ability
Specialty: None

Effect: This spell shields the caster from the effects of *Farseeing* and *Sense Power*. Any who try to observe the caster with *Farseeing* cannot see him or even traces of him. They may be able to see the major effects of his passing, such as smoke and ashes from fires he has lit, but that is all. Against *Sense Power*, this spell imposes a –8 penalty on the Observe (*Sense Power*) or Perception test to detect the caster's power.

Veiling Shadow [Sorcery]

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: 100 feet per point of Bearing
Duration: 1 hour per point of Bearing
Weariness TN: 12
Cost: 2 spell picks
Method: Standard, Song
Specialty: Sorcery

Effect: With this spell, a sorcerer can call down a cloud of darkness to hide the evil acts of himself and his minions. The shadow covers an area with a radius of 10 feet per point of Bearing the caster possesses. The caster may increase the radius by +10 feet for every –1 penalty he takes to his Stamina test. The shadow functions as 'darkness' for purposes of determining physical test modifiers (see page 218).

Victory-spell

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Touch
Duration: 1 minute per point of Bearing
Weariness TN: 12
Cost: 2 spell picks
Method: Standard, Runes
Specialty: None

Effect: This spell grants the caster—or any upon whom he confers its powers—the virtue of victory and triumph. He receives a +3 bonus on all Armed Combat and Ranged Combat tests and on Willpower tests to resist fear. Furthermore, any Courage he spends to enhance his attacks grants a +5 bonus, instead of the normal +3.

Voice of Command

Casting Time: 1
Range: Within the sound of the caster's normal speaking voice
Duration: See text
Weariness TN: 10
Cost: 2 spell picks
Requisites: Bearing 10+, Willpower +3 or greater
Method: Standard
Specialty: None

Effect: This spell grants the caster a brief, limited ability to force others to comply with his will. Because it is so limited, it is not sorcery, but nevertheless the Wise and those allied with them make use of it as little as possible.

Voice of Command allows the caster to issue a single instruction, order, or command. The command must be simple and easily expressed, such as, 'Come back here!,' 'Leave this place!' or 'Drop your weapons!'. It must be a single order. The caster cannot compound two or more orders into a single sentence, such as 'Drop your weapons and surrender!' The command only affects one person, who must be able to hear it.

The command's effects last until fulfilled or until one hour per point the caster has in Bearing passes, whichever comes first. If desired, the caster may follow the spell with Intimidate to convince the target of the value of continued obedience. Under no circumstances can this spell be used to order someone to knowingly cause himself direct harm.

Voice of Suasion

Casting Time: 1
Range: Within the sound of the caster's normal speaking voice
Duration: 1 minute per point of Bearing
Weariness TN: 10
Cost: 1 spell pick
Method: Standard, Ability
Specialty: None

Effect: This spell increases the caster's powers of persuasion. His every word seems sweet and reasonable, his opinions and policies most worthy of consideration. He receives a +8 test result bonus to all uses of Persuade, though the victim may make an opposed Wisdom test to resist as usual (see page 132).

WATERSHAPING

CASTING TIME: 1
RANGE: 50 feet per point of Bearing
DURATION: Concentration
WEARINESS TN: 10
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard, Song
SPECIALTY: Water

EFFECT: This spell grants the caster power over nearby waters. He can shape the waves as he desires, transforming them into elaborate depictions of mounted warriors, dragons, castles, or whatever else he desires. This is more a form of amusement than anything else. He cannot cause waves of water to smash ships or drown his foes. However, he can use his control over the water to speed or slow ships, creating an 'average current' (see the 'Travel Speed Table,' page 252) to help or hinder a vessel. Additionally, in some circumstances the character's control over water may grant him a slight test result bonus—up to +2—to Inspire or Intimidate.

WIND-MASTERY

CASTING TIME: 2
RANGE: 50 feet per point of Bearing
DURATION: Concentration; additional Stamina test each hour
WEARINESS TN: 10
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard, Song
SPECIALTY: Air

EFFECT: With this spell, a caster can control the winds, altering their speed and direction, causing them to arise where the air is calm, and stilling them where it is not. He cannot create or enhance winds so that they are strong enough to cause damage and destruction, but he can cause breezes stiff enough to make people have to lean into them as they walk. If he uses it to propel a ship, this counts as 'sailing with a strong wind' (see the 'Travel Speed Table,' page 252).

WIZARD'S GUISE

CASTING TIME: 1 minute
RANGE: Self
DURATION: 1 hour per point of Bearing
WEARINESS TN: 8
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: This spell allows a caster to alter his appearance slightly, enhancing a disguise so that he may pass unnoticed and unmarked among other folk. It provides a +8 bonus to Guise tests. Other persons who have reason to suspect he is not what he seems may make an opposed Wisdom (or Insight) test to see through the disguise as normal for Guise (see page 124).

WIZARD'S HAND

CASTING TIME: 1
RANGE: 5 feet per point of Bearing
DURATION: Instant
WEARINESS TN: 10
COST: 1 spell pick
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: With this spell, a caster can 'grasp' an object at a distance and move or fling it. The object must be one the caster could lift with his own Strength, such as a pitcher of ale, a weapon, or a figurine. The effect is instantaneous, so while the caster can

fling the object away from him or draw it swiftly to his hand, he cannot move it back and forth or cause it to dart about a room.

To determine how far the caster can throw an object with Wizard's Hand, he has a Strength of 10 or his own Strength, whichever is greater. The caster can use his Ranged Combat skill to aim the thrown item at someone or something else, although he does not need to do so to draw something into his hand. The spell does not allow for fine manipulation in any case.

If another person holds the object in question, that person may make an opposed Strength test to counter the spell's effects and retain his grasp on it. The spellcaster has an effective Strength of 20 for the purposes of this contest.

WORD OF COMMAND

CASTING TIME: 1
RANGE: See text
DURATION: See text
WEARINESS TN: 13 (see text)
COST: 3 spell picks
REQUISITES: Any 10 other spells
METHOD: Standard
SPECIALTY: None

EFFECT: This spell, different from both *Command* and *Voice of Command*, is among the most potent in Middle-earth. By invoking a *Word of Command*, a caster can enhance the power of any other spell. This power comes at a price: the character automatically loses one Weariness Level. Any Weariness Levels lost due to failure on the Stamina test are in addition to this.

When a character utters a *Word of Command* in conjunction with another spell, he may choose to do any one of the following to the other spell:

- Double the spell's range.
- Double the spell's duration.
- Cause the spell to do maximum damage.
- Provide a +8 bonus for any test needed to cast or use the spell—other than the Stamina test.

The duration and range of a *Word of Command* are the same as those of the spell it augments. Its effects end when the other spell ends.

A *Word of Command* is so powerful that it may have unintended side effects. For example, when Gandalf used one to hold the door of the Chamber of Mazarbul against the Balrog of Moria, the door couldn't stand the strain and shattered. Many other such effects are possible, all at the Narrator's discretion. They are particularly likely to occur when the character using the *Word of Command* fails his Stamina test or an opposed test associated with the underlying spell.

ENCHANTED ITEMS

'As they sang the hobbit felt the love of
beautiful things made by hands and by
cunning and by magic moving
through him[.]'
— The Hobbit

Magical power does not reside solely in magicians, wizards, or Elves. Spellcasters and craftsmen have at time worked magic into weapons and other objects, creating talismans and enchanted blades of great power. Although quite rare, enchanted items are definitely a part of Middle-earth and thus likely to play a role in your game chronicle.

CREATING ENCHANTED ITEMS

Characters can create enchanted items in three ways. First, Elven characters can use their Art racial ability (page 65) to create items of minor power. Second, Craftsmen can use their Enchantment order ability (page 83) to do the same thing. Third, characters who can cast spells can take a masterwork item and place enchantments within it.

Creating an enchanted item requires several things. The first is a masterwork item. Not just any item suffices to contain an enchantment. Only the best, finest, and strongest ones will do. If the item's creator cannot make a masterwork item of the type he needs, he must obtain one through other means.

The second requirement is access to the necessary spells or magical powers. A magician cannot create a sword that does extra damage against Orcs unless he knows the *Bane-spell* or can find someone who does to help him. In situations where no spell directly relates to the ability in question—such as with many items that provide bonuses to Skill tests—the Narrator should assume that any craftsman or spellcaster can, with sufficient diligence, place such an enchantment upon an item.

The third requirement is time. Enchanting an item is a time-consuming process, not something that spellcasters can do casually. In addition to the time spent creating or acquiring the item to enchant, the creator must craft and emplace the enchantment upon or within the item. For items that provide bonuses to skill tests, this requires a minimum of one week per +1 bonus, and it may take more time, such as one month per +1, at the Narrator's discretion. The caster must work on the item continuously during that time. If something interrupts him, forcing him to leave the work alone for more than a day—or a week, for items taking months to create—the enchantment is ruined, and the caster must begin all over again.

The fourth requirement is effort. Enchanting items is a taxing process. The creator must make a Stamina test to resist loss of Weariness Levels once every two days (for items created over several weeks) or once per week (for items created over several months). The Narrator should set the TN for the test based on the TN for resisting Weariness for the spells used—or their equivalents. Failure on one of these tests results in a loss of the appropriate Weariness Levels for the next time period: two days or one week. This reflects the gradual fatigue that creeps over a spellcaster during the long days required to enchant an item. Its impossible to normally regain these lost Weariness Levels while attempting to enchant an item, without disrupting the entire process. If the character decides to rest to recover these levels or if he ever reaches the 'Exhausted' level, the creation process fails altogether.

Narrators must approve all enchanted items, examining them to ensure they fit the flavour of the chronicle and aren't likely to cause game balance problems. Among other things, they should make sure the powers placed within the item are appropriate. Some spells and powers—*Bane-spell, Farseeing, Guarding-spell, Victory-spell,* and minor bonuses to skill tests—are clearly suitable for enchanted items. Others, like *Fog-raising, Power of the Land,* and *Watershaping,* probably are not appropriate.

Narrators should impose whatever other restrictions or requirements on the process of enchanting items they consider suitable. Characters should never become 'enchantment factories,' churning out one item after another until their adventuring groups are armed to the teeth with beruned swords and lesser rings of power. That's not appropriate for Middle-earth and can quickly cause problems within the chronicle.

Characters who try to churn out lots of enchanted items or to create ones more powerful than they can really handle should likely find themselves the target of thieves or worse. Those who are unable to properly protect an enchanted item may find it taken from them quickly. Of course, this can the subject of entire adventures too. In one sense, *The Lord of the Rings* is about a Hobbit who wished to properly dispose of an enchanted item that was far more powerful than he.

ENCHANTED ITEMS IN MIDDLE-EARTH

As mentioned above, in Middle-earth, enchanted items are rare indeed. The average character may likely never possess one and might only see a few during his lifetime. Even for heroes fated to fulfil great destinies, enchanted items do not come along frequently, far less frequently than heroic items (see accompanying sidebar).

Almost all enchanted items in Middle-earth are unique, each with a name and a history all its own. When a character finds an enchanted item—or studies one—he usually learns who used it before, where it comes from, and perhaps even who forged or created it. Such items weave in and out of the tales of Middle-earth, aiding or hindering those who possess them and creating legacies likely to live throughout the character's time and beyond.

Because of these reasons—rarity and uniqueness—enchanted items are regarded as precious and valuable, as much so as any heirloom. They are not bought and sold like commodities.

Heroic Items

Many items which have not been enchanted with powerful magics nevertheless aid their users in certain ways. Thanks to the skill of the craftsman or the subtle magic of Middle-earth, noteworthy weapons, armour, and other items sometimes acquire abilities of their own. These are referred to as heroic items.

Heroic items—usually weapons or armour—are a way to provide player characters and NPCs with 'magic items' that aren't truly enchanted. Instead, the abilities they possess arise from other sources, such as:

Quality of Craftsmanship: As noted under the Masterwork order ability (page 84), items of high quality may provide minor bonuses to characters. Well-made weapons do greater damage than ordinary blades, and well-made armour offers greater protection than regular mail.

The Work of Old: Of greater work still were the blades and armour of old, forged in ancient days in Beleriand or Númenor or even the lands across the Sea. Made with high craft, using secrets of metalworking now lost, the work of old is of higher quality than even the masterworks of these latter days.

Lineage and History: An item's lineage—what it's made of, where it comes from, who has used it—and the chronicle of events it has experienced and deeds it has made possible may make it a heroic item.

Heroic items aren't necessarily as powerful as enchanted items. Usually their abilities are flavourful and fun, but limited or of low-strength. Typically they provide a minor bonus (+1 to +3) to attack tests, damage rolls, or relevant skill tests, such as Inspire, Intimidate, or Siegecraft. These may be restricted based on the item's purpose or history. For example, a sword that has slain hundreds of Orcs may have become a heroic weapon that provides a +2 bonus to attack tests, damage rolls, and Intimidate tests, but only against Orcs.

The most important thing about heroic items is not the bonuses or abilities they provide, but the way they contribute to the flavour of the chronicle and encourage roleplaying. Rather than seeking out a powerful enchanted item, a player should want to keep his character's heroic item because of what it signifies about the character and how it fits into the character's background. For example, Aragorn's sword Andúril is far less powerful, in game terms, than Gandalf's blade Glamdring, but would Aragorn trade Andúril for Glamdring—or any other sword for that matter? Of course not! Andúril is his ancestral blade, forged of the shards of Narsil that Elendil himself wielded and which Isildur used to cut the One Ring from Sauron's hand. That's far more important, and worth far more to the character, than a few extra test bonuses or other powers.

Even assuming someone were foolish enough to want to sell an enchanted item he had made or obtained, establishing a fair price would prove difficult if not impossible. However, at times heroes and leaders may exchange enchanted items or give them as gifts to express their appreciation and affection for others.

Item Descriptions

The following are several enchanted (or heroic) items found in Middle-earth. Some, such as Andúril or the One Ring, are unique. Others, like Elven-cloaks, are not. Narrators can provide these items to characters as desired or use them as guidelines for creating their own enchanted items for their chronicles.

Dwarf Doors

> *' "[Dwarf-doors] are invisible, and their own masters cannot find them or open them, if their secret is forgotten." '*
>
> *— Gimli, The Fellowship of the Ring*

Dwarves often craft enchanted doors to protect their mansions and treasure-vaults. Typically these doors are made of stone, to resemble the mountainside or cavern wall into which they fit. They have several magical properties.

First, when shut, they remain invisible. Only those who know their exact location—or the command-words necessary to make them appear—can find and open them.

Second, they are locked with *Shutting-spells*. Only those who know the specific *Opening-spell* for that door, or who possess the key, can open them. The general *Opening-spell* may also work, but the TN for the Willpower test is usually high (15–25). This only applies to attempts to open the doors from the outside though. Anyone inside the doors can push them open effortlessly.

Third, such doors are often impervious to attacks. They cannot be forced inward, and those who try to batter them down with picks or axes simply smash their weapons uselessly against the door.

Lastly, these doors may contain other enchantments, such as *Exclusion*.

DWARVEN MAGICAL TOYS

'There were toys the like of which they had never seen before, all beautiful and some obviously magical.'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

These enchanted items, the only ones in Middle-earth regularly bought and sold, are small toys for children. They range from musical crackers containing miniature instruments that emit beautiful, perfect tones when opened, to small metallic soldiers that can walk for short distances, to toy boats that sail themselves, and dozens of other types in between.

ELVEN-FOOD

'As soon as Frodo had swallowed a little of the warm and fragrant liquor he felt a new strength of heart, and the heavy drowsiness left his limbs.'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

As with so many other things made by the Elves, their food often possesses properties other races consider magic. The best known of these are *miruvor* (the cordial of the Elves) and *lembas* (their waybread).

MIRUVOR: This rare and delicious drink invigorates both the body and the mind. A character who consumes even a mouthful receives a +4 bonus on Stamina tests to resist Weariness, the effects of exposure, sleepiness, and the like. This lasts for one hour. He also regains one lost Weariness Level automatically.

LEMBAS: Elven waybread is baked in small cakes and then wrapped in leaves to keep it fresh. Provided they are not removed from their leaf-wrappings, *lembas* cakes remain fresh for many days. A single cake provides enough sustenance for a Man to march for a day. Moreover, *lembas* strengthens both limb and will, making it possible for travellers to keep going when hope has failed or the road seems too dark to continue. It grants a +2 bonus to Stamina tests to resist Weariness, and a +1 bonus to Willpower tests. Both effects last for one day, though they may end sooner or be less strong if the character does not consume an entire cake.

ELVEN-GEAR

' "But they should serve you well: they are light to wear, and warm enough or cool enough at need." '
— The Fellowship of the Ring

Thanks to Elves' innately magical nature, items they create often possess minor magical properties. They rarely give these items to other peoples, but they sometimes part with them to aid great quests or great heroes. Some examples include:

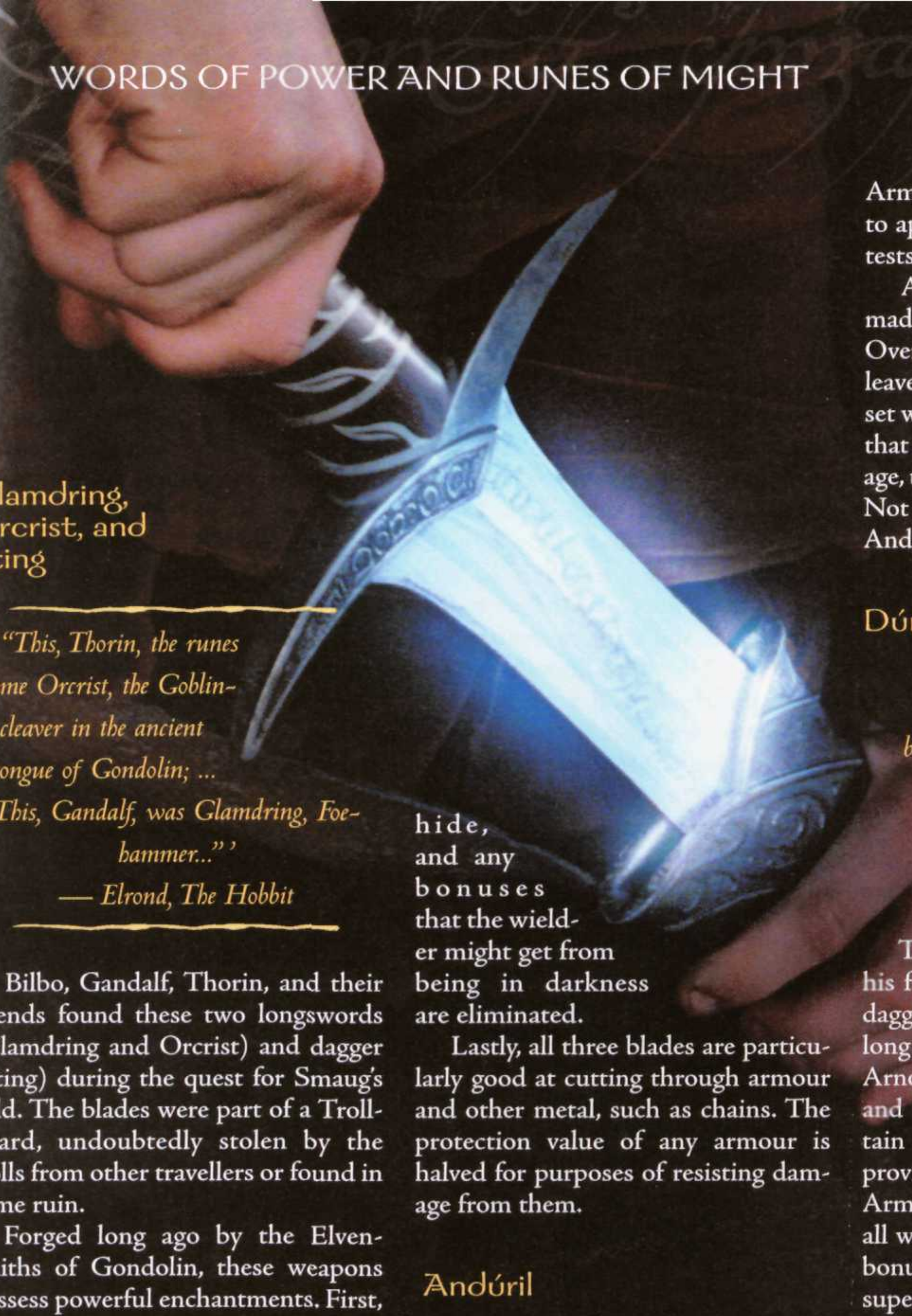
ELVEN-BOATS: These small grey boats, steered with short-handled, leaf-bladed paddles, can carry twice the weight of any other boat of like size without foundering, yet are so light that two Hobbits can easily carry one across level ground. They are so easy to steer that they provide a +1 bonus to Sea-craft (Boating) tests. However, a boater can easily mishandle them if he does not take care with his task. Anytime a character in one fails a Sea-craft (Boating) test, he automatically suffers one extra degree of failure.

ELVEN-CLOAKS: More valuable still to travellers in dangerous lands are the grey-green Elven-cloaks, which blend subtly with the natural world to hide those who wear them from the eyes of enemies. They grant a +8 bonus to Stealth (Hide) tests if the character remains still, or a +4 bonus if the character moves. These bonuses apply regardless of terrain, but not against Elves who try to see the wearer.

ELVEN-ROPE: Made of *hithlain*, misty grey Elven-rope is light and slender but as strong as a thick, heavy rope made by Men. It provides a +1 bonus to Climb tests. More importantly, when commanded to do so—either directly, or indirectly by expressed desire—an Elven-rope can loosen the knots tied in it and fall free for its user to recover. Some evil or wicked beings cannot tolerate the touch of Elven-rope. It burns and bites them, doing one point of damage per minute.

ENCHANTED AND HEROIC BLADES

One of the most common types of enchanted and heroic items found in Middle-earth is that of weapons—usually swords and daggers. The ones described below provide excellent examples for other blades the Narrator can create for her own chronicle.



Glamdring, Orcrist, and Sting

' "This, Thorin, the runes name Orcrist, the Goblin-cleaver in the ancient tongue of Gondolin; ... This, Gandalf, was Glamdring, Foe-hammer..." '

— Elrond, The Hobbit

Bilbo, Gandalf, Thorin, and their friends found these two longswords (Glamdring and Orcrist) and dagger (Sting) during the quest for Smaug's gold. The blades were part of a Troll-hoard, undoubtedly stolen by the trolls from other travellers or found in some ruin.

Forged long ago by the Elven-smiths of Gondolin, these weapons possess powerful enchantments. First, each is a bane against Orcs, providing a +5 bonus to attack tests to hit them.

Second, each glows with a bluish light in the presence of Orcs, thus warning the wielder that he is in danger. Such a blade can detect Orcs within 500 yards. The light becomes brighter the closer the Orcs are, and the more of them there are. This light pains the eyes of Orcs and strikes fear into their hearts. The wielder of one of these weapons has a +5 bonus for Intimidate tests against Orcs when his weapon is drawn. When Orcs are within 100 yards, the exposed blade gives off light equivalent to a torch. This can make it difficult for the wielder to hide, and any bonuses that the wielder might get from being in darkness are eliminated.

Lastly, all three blades are particularly good at cutting through armour and other metal, such as chains. The protection value of any armour is halved for purposes of resisting damage from them.

Andúril

'The Sword of Elendil was forged anew by Elvish smiths, and on its blade was traced a device of seven stars set between the crescent Moon and rayed Sun...'

— The Fellowship of the Ring

Forged from the shards of Narsil, the Sword of Elendil that broke beneath him when he slew and was slain by the Dark Lord Sauron, Andúril is the blade wielded by Aragorn son of Arathorn. Although not enchanted, it is a heroic weapon because of its long lineage and high purpose. It provides a +2 bonus to Armed Combat tests and a +3 bonus to appropriate Inspire and Intimidate tests when drawn.

Additionally, Andúril has a sheath made for it by the Lady Galadriel. Overlaid with a tracery of flowers and leaves wrought of silver and gold, and set with gems spelling out Elven-runes that detail the sword's name and lineage, the sheath protects the blade thus: Not even in Aragorn's defeat shall Andúril be broken or stained.

Dúnadan Blades

' "Doubtless the Orcs despoiled them, but feared to keep the knives, knowing them for what they are: work of Westernesse..." '

— Aragorn, The Two Towers

These blades, found by Frodo and his friends in the Barrow-downs, are daggers crafted by Dúnadan smiths long years ago, when the Men of Arnor fought against the Witch-king and his terrible followers. They contain a minor bane-enchantment that provides a +2 test result bonus to Armed Combat when used to attack all who serve Sauron or Mordor. The bonus increases to +3 when fighting supernatural foes such as Nazgûl.

ENT-DRAUGHTS

'The effect of the draught began at the toes, and rose steadily through every limb, bringing refreshment and vigour as it coursed upwards...'

— The Two Towers

Deep in the heart of Fangorn Forest there live Ents, the Tree-herds, protectors and guardians of the woods. Ents consume only the special water of the Entwash. Ent-draughts have strong magical properties that affect those who drink them. First, they refresh and invigorate, immediately restoring two lost Weariness Levels to the drinker and providing a +2 bonus to Stamina tests to resist Weariness for the next three hours. Second, they heal minor injuries, such as cuts, scrapes, and bruises, by restoring 1d6+1 lost wound points. Third, they can have a long-term effect as well. If a character drinks Ent-draughts frequently—once a day or more over three or more days—he becomes slightly taller (an inch or two at most) and healthier. At the Narrator's discretion, he may gain +1 to Strength, Vitality, or Stamina. A character can only benefit from this effect once.

Unfortunately for adventurers, the water of the Ents loses its magical properties if bottled or taken away from the forest. Only if the characters drink within Fangorn or receive a bowl of water directly from an Ent can they benefit from the effects described above.

MORGUL-KNIFE

> *'They gazed in astonishment, for the blade seemed to melt, and vanished like a smoke in the air, leaving only the hilt in Strider's hand.'*
>
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

A vicious weapon, steeped in sorcery and used only by the most powerful servants of the Shadow, a Morgul-knife consists of a long, thin blade attached to a hilt on which are written foul words in letters only spellcasters and Elves can see. Such a blade does normal damage for a dagger, but if it causes so much as a single point of damage, two terrible effects occur.

First, the pain of the wound is so great that the victim suffers a –2 penalty or the penalty from his lost Wound Levels—whichever is greater—on all tests until he is healed. This wound requires a TN 25 Healing test to heal. It heals naturally at only one-third the normal rate.

But the second effect is even worse. The tip of the knife breaks off in the wound, remaining there and working its way inward. It does an additional 1d6–2 (minimum of 1) points of damage to the character every day until he has healed or dies.

A Morgul-knife cannot withstand the touch of the sun. Its blade withers into smoke and fades away in daylight.

THE *PALANTÍRI*

> *' "The palantíri came from beyond Westernesse, from Eldamar. The Noldor made them. Fëanor himself, maybe, wrought them..." '*
>
> *— Gandalf, The Two Towers*

Globes of dark crystal, glowing with hearts of fire when used, the *palantíri* allow users to see things far off and to converse in thought over long distances. Elendil and his sons brought them to Middle-earth. Three remained in Arnor: at Annúminas, Amon Sûl, and in the Emyn Beraid. The last of these was Elendil's Stone, which looked ever West, towards the Sea and the lands beyond. The four others were sent to Gondor: the master-stone—to which the views of the others were ever open—to Osgiliath and the others to Minas Anor, Minas Ithil, and Orthanc.

Sadly, by the end of the Third Age most of the *palantíri* were lost. The one in the Tower Hills was guarded by the Elves until TA 3021, while the other two North-stones were drowned in the shipwreck that slew Arvedui Last-king in TA 1975. The *palantír* of Osgiliath was lost in the waters of the Anduin during the Kin-strife in TA 1437, and Sauron's forces captured the Ithil-stone when they took Minas Ithil in TA 2002. The Anor-stone remained in the hands of the Ruling Stewards, who wisely refrained from using it. Denethor II, the last Ruling Steward, did use it and was thereby ensnared and fooled by Sauron.

The stone of Orthanc, long forgotten by Men, came into the hands of Saruman when he took up residence there in TA 2759. He used it for his own purposes, including converse with Sauron, by whom he was corrupted. He lost it when his slave Gríma hurled it at Gandalf. Gandalf turned the stone over to Aragorn, its rightful owner. By mastering the stone and wrenching control of it away from Sauron, Aragorn caused the Dark Lord to move to war too precipitously, leading to the Enemy's defeat at the Battle of the Pelennor Fields.

While the Ithil-stone was lost in the collapse of the Barad-dûr, the Anor-stone and Orthanc-stone remained for King Elessar to use. Unfortunately, the Anor-stone, clasped by Denethor II as he died on his pyre, shows only two aged hands withering in fire, unless the user possesses the strength of will to see what he wishes to see. Elessar was able to freely use the Orthanc-stone.

Perfect spheres of black crystal, the *palantíri* are large and heavy. The smallest were about a foot in diameter, the largest (at Amon Sûl and Osgiliath) too big and heavy for one man to lift. They cannot be damaged or even scratched, though it may be that great heat or force—such as in the burning of Osgiliath or the collapse of the Dark Tower—would suffice to destroy them.

Powers and Use

Each *palantír* grants the power of *Farseeing*, with a range of 500 miles (or 750 miles for the most powerful stones, those of Amon Sûl and

Osgiliath). Regardless of range, each stone can link with any other stone and see what is around it. If two stones are already speaking to each other, any other stone's attempt to contact one of them simply shows blankness. The stone of Osgiliath was the only exception. It could eavesdrop and see whatever any other stone was seeing, or even what multiple stones were seeing simultaneously.

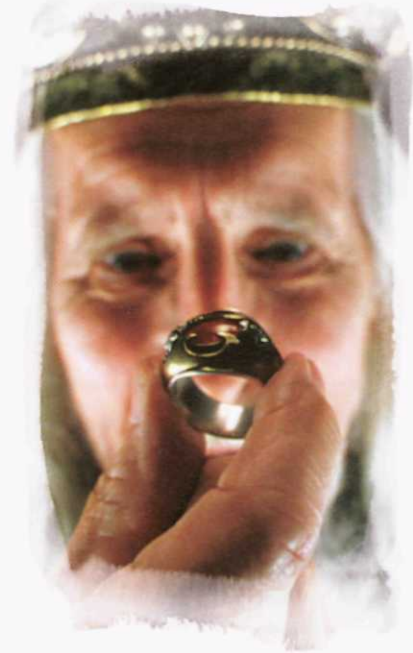
If two people gaze into stones linked in this fashion, they can communicate as if using *Mind-speech*. However, there is peril here, in that if one of the users possesses the power of *Command* (see page 176), he can use it through the stones to force the other user to keep looking at his stone and to answer questions put to him.

Activating a *palantír* requires one minute and a TN 15 Willpower test. Reduce the TN to 10 for the Heirs of Elendil or their designates, the stones' legitimate owners and users. If the test Completely fails, the stone remains blank. A Disastrous Failure unexpectedly draws the user into communication with Sauron, necessitating a TN 25 Willpower test to wrench himself away from the stone before being forced to engage in a contest of wills with the Dark Lord himself. If the test simply fails, the stone shows a scene, but not what the user wished to see. He may try again after a minute has passed. If the test succeeds, the user sees what he wishes to see. For attempts to use the Anor-stone after the death of Denethor II, increase the TN for the test to 20.

Two characters looking into or through a stone may engage in opposed Willpower tests to control what it shows. It was thus that Sauron tricked Denethor II, showing him only what the Dark Lord wished him to see, feeding the fires of his despair.

After using a *palantír*, a character must make a Stamina test to resist Weariness. The TN is 10, +1 for every five minutes spent using the stone. If the character had to engage in a contest of wills to retain control of the stone, increase the TN for the Stamina test by +5 or more. If the character fails the test, he loses one Weariness Level. Complete and disastrous failures cost him two and three Weariness Levels respectively.

THE RINGS OF POWER



One Ring to rule them all,
One Ring to find them,
One Ring to bring them all
and in the darkness bind them

The mightiest and most dangerous of all the enchanted items of Middle-earth are the Rings of Power. Even the least of the Rings offers great power to one who wears it, but that power almost always corrupts and harms, in the end working great evil, much to the Dark Lord's pleasure.

The Rings of Power were forged during the Second Age, beginning in about the year SA 1500, by the Elven-smiths of Eregion, under the leadership of Celebrimbor. Eager for knowledge and skill, they had succumbed to the blandishments of Sauron, who—wearing the fair guise of Annatar ('Lord of Gifts')—instructed them and broadened their lore. Their early efforts resulted in lesser Rings, but soon they had progressed in skill sufficient to, with Annatar's help, create the Seven and the Nine. In SA 1590, Celebrimbor himself, with no aid of Sauron's, crafted the Three Rings.

But it was not long before the Elven-smiths were betrayed and learned the depths of their folly. In SA 1600, Sauron forged the One Ring in Sammath Naur, giving himself the power to know of and control all Rings in whose crafting he had a part. By SA 1693, the War of the Elves and Sauron had begun, and Sauron overthrew Eregion, slaying Celebrimbor and seizing all of the Rings of Power he could find. The Seven and the Nine he took, but the Three remained hidden from him, despite the torment to which Celebrimbor was put before he died.

General Powers

All Rings of Power, from the least to the Great Ring itself, possess certain powers in common. First, they have the power to protect themselves. For one thing, they can hide themselves from the sight of others when worn. Another person wearing a greater Ring, or with comparative power, may be able to see them, but those without such strength see nothing or confuse what they see with something else. For another, they can subtly change size, becoming large enough to slip off the finger of a careless wearer and thus, slowly, make their way back to their dark master.

Second, the greater Rings of Power have the ability to extend the wearer's lifespan. At first this may seem a wondrous gift, but as time progresses the wearer begins to consider it a burden. He feels 'stretched out,' drawn thin. Eventually, torn by lust for his Ring and despair over this burden, he fades, becoming naught more than a wraith under Sauron's command. The One Ring, for example, preserved Gollum's life for over 500 years, roughly five times the lifespan of a Hobbit.

Except for the One Ring (see below), each of the Great Rings is a band of metal adorned with a distinctive gem.

The One Ring

> *'"He only needs the One; for he made that Ring himself, it is his, and he let a great part of his own former power pass into it..."'*
>
> *— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring*

Greatest of all the Great Rings is the One Ring, forged by Sauron to control the other Rings and thus dominate the Free Peoples of Middle-earth. A band of plain gold, unadorned by any gem, it has etched along its inner and outer faces the *Ring-spell* that Sauron uttered as he completed it. One who heats it can see these fiery letters.

More so than any of the other Rings, the One protects itself. As a receptacle of much of Sauron's power, it is invulnerable to harm. Only the fires of Orodruin can melt or mar it. It takes over the will of any who keep it, even for a little time. If its 'owner' tries to set it aside or give it away, he finds that he cannot. Either he resists doing so consciously, or subconsciously he 'forgets' to do whatever he had intended to. Any who try to take the Ring from an owner, or even ask to see it or hold it, become evil and ugly in his eyes, fit only to be harmed or fled from. If a character holds the One Ring, he must make a TN 25 Willpower test to voluntarily get rid of it in any way or subject it to harm or allow another to see or handle it. He must make a TN 15 Willpower test to avoid striking or fleeing from anyone who asks to see or hold it. If anyone succeeds in taking the Ring from an owner by force, the dispossessed wretch must make a TN 20 Willpower test or be driven mad by grief and desire for the golden thing.

To anyone who possesses it, the One Ring grants power according to his stature. To some extent, this applies to all Rings of Power, but it is most evident by far in the One. To lesser folk, such as Hobbits, it grants merely the extension of life and the power of invisibility. While invisible, a character cannot be seen, though he could be perceived through hearing or smell. Moreover, he still casts a shadow, though a faint and wavering one, and can be detected by that. Nor does the Ring conceal any source of light he carries himself—such as a torch or the glow of an enchanted sword—or any sound he might make. In combat, an invisible character receives a +10 bonus to attack tests. Assuming an enemy can even guess where he is to counterattack, all test to hit the wearer suffer a −10 penalty.

To greater folk, the One Ring can grant greater powers, especially as they become accustomed to it and experienced in its use. Its primary power is that of *Command*: the ability to dominate and overwhelm the will of others, forcing them to do your bidding. This may not be as obvious as the blunt lordship exercised by Sauron over his servants, for the One's power may, at least at first, seem benign. A great military commander wearing it would possess such gifts of leadership that all would follow him willingly. A great counsellor would become so persuasive that no one could ever disagree with him. But the fact of the matter—*Command*—remains, and as time passes and the One works its corrupting influence over its wearer, who would himself become nothing less than another Dark Lord. The Ring is wholly evil, and it turns to evil any who use it, no matter how high and noble their purposes when they put it on.

While wearing the One Ring, a person of sufficient power and will—typically one with at least 10 advancements

total, a Bearing of 10 or greater, or a Willpower of +4 or greater—can exercise the power of *Command*. This functions like the spell of the same name, though the wearer need not make any test to resist Weariness. The Ring enhances other abilities as well, at the Narrator's discretion. It may provide bonuses to Bearing, Willpower, Inspire, or Intimidate, make all of the wearer's spells 50% or 100% more powerful, or the like. The exact effects vary from character to character, based on the nature, will, disposition, and abilities of the character.

Furthermore, the Ring confers other powers upon its wearer. First, it sharpens his hearing, providing a +4 bonus to all Observe (Hear) and related Perception tests. At the same time, because wearing it thrusts a character into the world of wraiths and shadows, it dims the sight (–2 to Observe (Spot) and related Perception tests) but allows him to see in the dark (replace all penalties for darkness, fog, or the like with the flat –2 penalty). Second, it allows the wearer to comprehend the speech of all who serve the Shadow as if he had 5 levels in the appropriate Language skill, even if he has never learned their uncouth tongues.

Third, and most importantly, to a wearer of sufficient power, the One Ring reveals all things done, in the past or now, with the other Rings, and likewise reveals the hearts, minds, and thoughts of their wearers. Even worse, it allows the wearer to exert his power of *Command* over anyone who wears one of the other Rings, despite the distance between them, and the wearers of the other Rings suffer a –5 penalty to their Willpower tests to resist.

Carrying the One Ring is a burden that only becomes worse as one approaches Mordor. While more than 300 miles from Mordor, a bearer of the Ring need only make a TN 5 Stamina test once per day to resist the loss of Weariness Levels due to the Ring. From 100–300 miles, the TN rises to 10. Within 100 miles of Mordor, it rises to 15. When actually within Mordor, the character must make the TN 15 test every hour.

Carrying or innocently wearing the One Ring requires characters to make rolls to resist Corruption (see page 234). Putting on the Ring with intent to use it for evil, malicious, or domineering purposes causes the wearer to gain +6 Corruption or more automatically. Committing evil, malicious, or domineering acts while wearing the Ring, even if it were put on innocently, causes the wearer to gain +2 Corruption or more automatically.

A few powers of great innocence or strength can resist the One Ring. For example, it holds no power over Tom Bombadil, who can see through its invisibility as well.

The Seven

' "Seven the Dwarf-kings possessed, but three he has recovered, and the others the dragons have consumed." '

— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

Of the Seven Rings, tales differ. Some say that the Elves of Eregion gave them, or some of them, to the lords of the seven Houses of the Dwarves—or at least to Durin III of Khazad-dûm. Others say that Sauron captured the Seven in SA 1697 during his assault upon Eregion and later gave them to the Dwarves himself. In either case, it is plain that the Dark Lord's power lay upon them, as upon all the Great Rings save the Three.

The Dwarves, however, proved resistant to Sauron's domination. He was unable to exert control over them as he did over Men. Instead, the Seven simply enhanced the Dwarves' normal lust for treasure and wealth. Infuriated, Sauron began to gather the Seven back to himself, determined to control them. Three he recovered, including the Ring of Durin's House, but dragons consumed the other four. Presumably the remaining three were destroyed in the fall of Barad-dûr.

Dwarven nature imposes special powers and limitations upon the Seven. Dwarves are impervious to the Rings' life-extending properties. Instead of making the wearer susceptible to control by the wearer of the One, they harden his heart and mind even further to any domination, granting a +4 bonus to Willpower tests to resist any sort of control or *Command*. However, the wearer acquires the Grasping flaw. If he has it already, he suffers double the effect: He must spend two Courage to resist the lure of treasure.

The Seven also have the power, as the Dwarves put it, to 'breed gold'—that is, to make the owner wealthier through subtle magic. But they need gold to breed gold. Every two years the owner retains the ring, he gains +1 rank in the Hoard edge if he has at least one rank in that edge to begin with.

The Nine

' "Nine he gave to Mortal Men, proud and great, and so ensnared them. Long ago they fell under the dominion of the One." '

— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

Of all the Rings of Power, the Nine are most like the One Ring, and their wearers, Men, are more susceptible to Sauron's control than any other. After Sauron seized the Nine, he gave them to the mightiest Men who served him: three to great lords of the Númenóreans, six to lords among the Easterlings and Haradrim. Those who held the Nine became powerful kings and sorcerers, masters of all they surveyed and wealthy beyond dreams of avarice. They could walk among their people invisibly and see things others could not see. But they quickly fell utterly under Sauron's sway, and as their lives lengthened and became unendurable, they became Ringwraiths, Sauron's most terrible servants. After the holders of the Nine became the Nazgûl, Sauron took back to himself their Rings, to ensure his hold over them. In any event, they needed them no longer. Presumably they perished with the destruction of the One and the Barad-dûr.

The Three

' "The Three, fairest of all, the Elf-lords hid from him, and his hand never touched or sullied them." '

— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

The Three—Vilya, the Ring of Air; Nenya, the Ring of Water; and Narya, the Ring of Fire—were forged solely by Celebrimbor and not sullied by the touch of Sauron. Nenya he gave to the Lady Galadriel, and Vilya and Narya to Gil-galad. Gil-galad, in turn, left Narya with Círdan and gave Vilya to Elrond. When Gandalf arrived in Middle-earth, Círdan gave Narya to him, that he might the better rekindle the fires of valour among the Free People.

The Three have the same nature and purpose. They were made to preserve all things unstained, and to enhance the wearers' powers of understanding, making, and healing. They ward off decay and postpone weariness and sorrow. In addition to their individual powers (see below), each provides a +4 bonus to all Healing and Inspire tests, to Intimidate tests to cow the servants of the Shadow, and to any test to resist the powers of darkness, withstand destruction or decay, or the like. The Narrator must decide when and how these bonus apply depending on the nature of the encounter or the method by which the wearer employs a particular ring.

Narya, the Red Ring, the Ring of Fire, is set with a ruby. It provides the wearer with a +2 bonus on all tests to use fire magics, including Stamina tests to resist Weariness.

Nenya, the Ring of Adamant, the Ring of Water, is made of *mithril* and set with an adamant. It provides the wearer with a +2 bonus on all tests to use water magics, including Stamina tests to resist Weariness.

Vilya, the Ring of Sapphire, the Ring of Air, is made of gold and set with a sapphire. The mightiest of the Three, it provides the wearer with a +2 bonus on all tests to use air magics, including Stamina tests to resist Weariness.

The Lesser Rings

' "The lesser rings were only essays in the craft before it was full-grown, and to the Elven-smiths they were but trifles—yet still to my mind dangerous for mortals." '

— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

Long forgotten in the lore of the Wise are the lesser Rings, those first attempts by the Elves of Eregion to forge such powerful items. Though it seems likely that Sauron seized many of them and gave them to his favoured servants, others may have passed beyond his control—though not his influence.

If any still exist by the late Third Age, the lesser Rings would undoubtedly have powers similar to those of the Great Rings—limited longevity, enhancement of power, control over other people—but of weaker strength or effect. Some might even provide other powers, the use of which the Elven-smiths ultimately rejected for some reason. What remains certain, though, is that because Sauron had a hand, however slight, in their creation, his shadow lies upon them, and anyone who wears one may become corrupt and turn to darkness himself.

Where these Rings might now be, though, none can say. Some may be in the hands of Men of the North or East, or of Dwarves with whom the Elven-smiths had friendship long ago. Others may wait in long-forgotten tombs and ruins for adventurers to discover. Some were undoubtedly lost over the ages and now lie hidden in strange corners of the world until someone finds them.

Chapter Eight

AXE AND SWORD

> *'In their hands were tall spears of ash, painted shields were slung at their backs, long swords were at their belts...'*
> — *The Two Towers*

Characters on bold adventures often find themselves in need of weapons, armour, and other gear of war, for the servants of the Enemy hesitate not to slay the weak and defenseless if they find them. Also, as Samwise well knows, even simple items like rope and cooking gear can be a comfort on the road and a great help in times of need.

* * *

MONEY

That which characters cannot make for themselves, they must acquire through purchase or trade. Much of the commerce in Middle-earth, such as the traffic between Dwarves and Men, takes the form of barter. Men trade food and other goods to Dwarves for ore and metalwork, for example. But at other times, folk must use coins to buy what they need. Arnor minted coins in its time, as have other realms of Men, and Gondor does still. The coin of least value commonly found in Eriador and Gondor is the *copper penny*, a small coin used for minor purchases and sometimes, as at Bilbo's party, given to children as a present.

For greater purchases, people use small silver coins usually called *silver pennies*, although different regions will have their own names for these. A silver penny equals a hundred copper pennies by the usual reckoning. Silver pennies are normally the cut quarters of the larger *silver piece*. A silver piece is a not inconsiderable amount of money, enough to purchase a pony in most parts. For even greater purchases, wealthy folk may use gold pieces or gold pennies. One gold penny equals one silver piece, and four gold pennies make a gold piece.

Weapons and Gear

PRICES FOR WEAPONS AND ARMOUR

Weapons have a base price of one silver piece (SP) per d6 of damage they do, plus an additional +1 silver penny (sp) per extra point of damage. Thus, a longsword that does 2d6+5 damage costs 2 SP + 5 sp—or 3 SP, 1 sp. A masterwork weapon costs three times the standard price, or more (if its owner will sell it at all). Any character can make certain weapons, such as clubs and staffs, for himself.

Armour has a base price of a minimum of one silver piece per point of protection it provides as a corslet, or double that for a full hauberk. For example, chainmail corslet costs 5 SP, while a chainmail hauberk is 10 SP. Armour made from more valuable materials, such as silver or *mithril*, or featuring elaborate decoration (such as gems) can cost much more. For example, according to Gimli, Frodo's gem-studded *mithril* corslet is worth more than the entire Shire and everything in it.

The prices listed for weapons and armour in the tables below are for purchases made in Minas Tirith. To determine the cost of a weapon or bit of armour in one of the other listed locations, multiply the base price by the indicated multiplier. A longsword that worth 3 SP, 1 sp in Minas Tirith costs 9 SP, 3 sp in the Shire, for example.

MONEY CHANGING

100 copper pennies (cp) = 1 silver penny (sp)
4 silver pennies (sp) = 1 silver piece (SP) = 1 gold penny (gp)
4 gold pennies (gp) = 1 gold piece (GP)
Thus:
1 gp = 4 SP = 16 sp = 1,600 cp

TABLE 8.1: PRICE CONVERSION

ITEM	COST IN SHIRE/BREE	COST IN DALE	COST IN MINAS TIRITH
GEAR OF WAR			
Weapon	x3	x2	x1
Armour	x5	x3	x1

WEAPONS

'For each of the hobbits he chose a dagger, long, leaf-shaped, and keen, of marvellous workmanship, damasked with serpent-forms in red and gold.'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

The folk of Middle-earth have created many weapons in forge or forest over the long years. Some mark those who crafted them, being of distinctive make or metal. Others are found from farthest North to warmest South.

WEAPON TYPES

ARROW: A long, straight shaft tipped with a sharp head and fletched with feathers, sometimes named a 'dart.' Most peoples use distinctive arrows. Those of Dwarves and Hobbits are somewhat shorter than others. Orc-arrows are black-shafted and -fletched and often poisoned—and also shorter, unless crafted for Uruks. Those knowledgeable in the ways of war can even tell a Southron arrow from one of Gondor.

AXE, BATTLE: A weapon consisting of a long, sturdy, wooden haft with a short, crescent-edged blade on one end. Oft used with

TABLE 8.2: WEAPONS

ARMED COMBAT WEAPONS

WEAPON	DAMAGE*	PARRY BONUS	SIZE	WEIGHT	PRICE
Axe, Battle	2d6+5	±0	M	8 lbs.	3 SP, 1 sp
Axe, Great†	2d6+7	±0	L	17 lbs.	3 SP, 3 sp
Club	2d6+2	+1	M	4 lbs.	Free
Dagger	2d6+2	±0	S	1 lb.	2 SP, 2 sp
Dagger, Long Knife	2d6+3	±0	M	1.5 lbs.	2 SP, 3 sp
Dagger, Orc	2d6+3	±0	S	1 lb.	2 SP, 3 sp
Hammer	2d6+3	±0	M	8 lbs.	2 SP, 3 sp
Mace	2d6+4	±0	M	9 lbs.	3 SP
Mattock†	2d6+4	±0	M	15 lbs.	3 SP
Pikestaff†	2d6+3	±0	L	15 lbs.	2 SP, 3 sp
Shield (bash)	1d6+1	+5 or +3	M	4–12 lbs.	See Armour Table
Spear	2d6+3	±0	L	7 lbs.	2 SP, 3 sp
Staff	2d6+2	+2	M	4 lbs.	Free
Sword, Longsword	2d6+5	+1	M	4–7 lbs.	3 SP, 1 sp
Sword, Longsword, Orc	2d6+5	+1	M	4–8 lbs.	3 SP, 1 sp
Sword, Scimitar	2d6+4	+1	M	4–6 lbs.	3 SP
Sword, Short Sword (Eket)	2d6+3	±0	M	3–5 lbs.	2 SP, 3 sp
Whip	1d6	−3	M	1 lb.	1 SP

RANGED COMBAT WEAPONS

WEAPON	DAMAGE*	RANGE (IN YARDS) (PB/S/M/L/X+S)	WEIGHT	PRICE
Arrow, regular or Orc	2d6+2	See 'Bow'	2 lbs. (20)	1 SP/20
Bow, Longbow†	See 'Arrow'	5/30/60/150/+30	3 lbs.	2 SP, 2 sp
Bow, Númenórean steelbow†	See 'Arrow'	5/40/80/200/+40	3 lbs.	Priceless
Bow, Shortbow†	See 'Arrow'	5/25/50/100/+25	2 lbs.	2 SP
Dagger, thrown	2d6+2	5/10/20/40/+5	1 lbs.	2 SP, 2 sp
Javelin	2d6+4	5/15/45/90/+15	2 lbs.	3 SP
Spear, thrown	2d6+3	5/10/20/40/+5	7 lbs.	2 SP, 3 sp
Stone, thrown	1d6	5/10/20/30/+5	0.5 lbs.	Free

*: Add Strength modifier to Armed Combat, unarmed, and thrown ranged weapon attacks.

†: Two-handed weapon

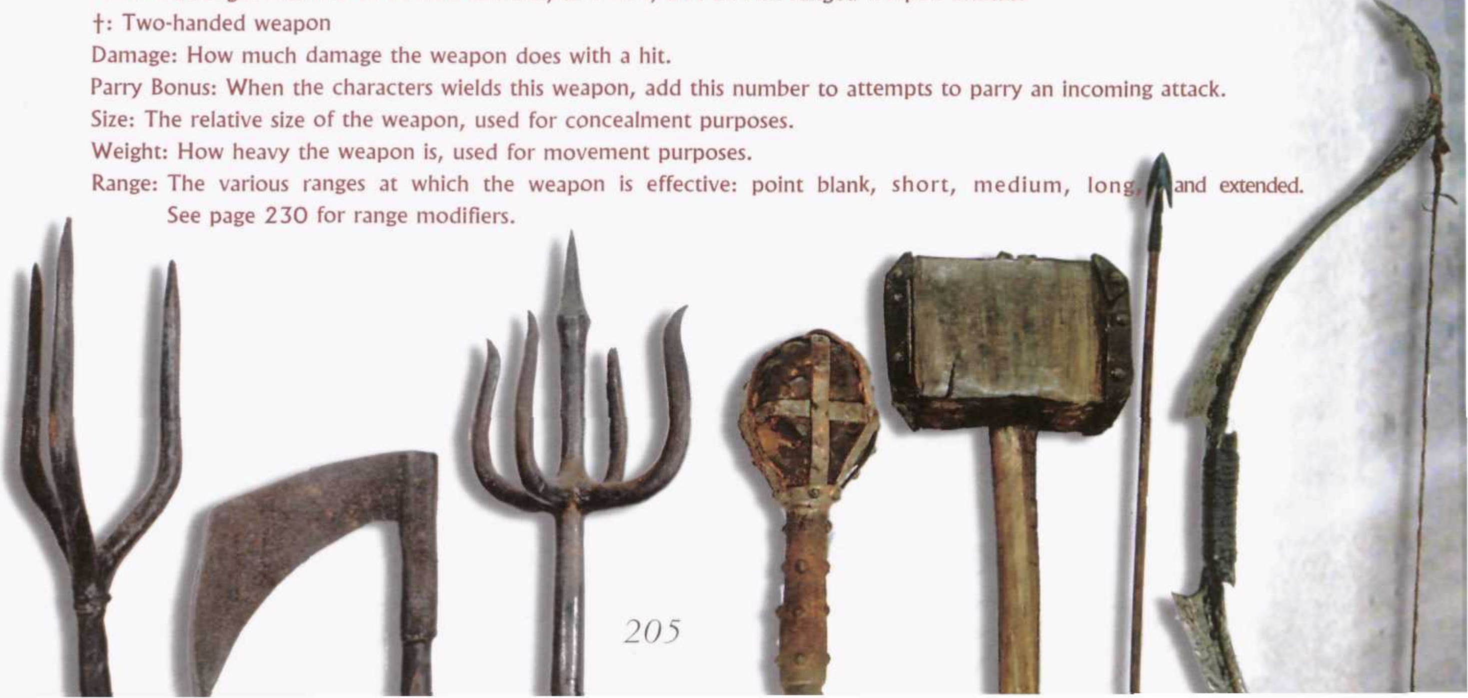
Damage: How much damage the weapon does with a hit.

Parry Bonus: When the characters wields this weapon, add this number to attempts to parry an incoming attack.

Size: The relative size of the weapon, used for concealment purposes.

Weight: How heavy the weapon is, used for movement purposes.

Range: The various ranges at which the weapon is effective: point blank, short, medium, long, and extended. See page 230 for range modifiers.



great skill by the Dwarves, it is not wielded only by them. Elves and Men fight with axes as well.

AXE, GREAT: A larger axe, often with two blades rather than one, used by tall, strong folk: the Men of Lossarnach, the Variags of Khand, and some Orcs and Trolls. It requires two hands to wield.

BOWS: Shorter folk (like Hobbits and Dwarves) and Wood-elves (who spend their days amid thick forests) use shortbows, which are easier to carry but have less range than other bows. Men and Orcs prefer longbows, taller weapons of greater range and power.

Rarest and deadliest of all bows is the Númenórean steelbow, made from shining, hollow steel crafted by the arts of Westernesse. The skill of making them has long been lost among Men, and the bows themselves have,. one by one, been lost or destroyed, but it may be that one or two remain, hidden in barrows or long-forgotten armouries. So powerful is a steelbow that at point blank, short, and medium ranges, arrows it fires do +2 damage.

CLUB: A short, often knobbed or gnarled, length of wood. A person with no other skill at arms can still pick up a short length of wood—or like objects, such as a stool—and make a club of it, though such crude weapons may do a point or two less damage than ordinary clubs.

DAGGER: A common tool and weapon carried even by many folk who are not warriors and have no desire to fight, a dagger (or knife) is a short length of bladed steel. Though usually wielded in the hand, it can also be thrown.

DAGGER, LONG KNIFE: Longer than an ordinary dagger but shorter than a short sword, this blade is favoured by the Elves of Mirkwood and some other peoples. It is a good weapon for an archer or other warrior who fights only when pressed, rather than entering the thick of combat. It can be thrown as a dagger, but awkwardly (–2 test result penalty).

DAGGER, ORC: Orcs use daggers of horrific appearance. Black-hilted and black-bladed, they have sharp, jagged edges that inflict painful wounds. They can be thrown as a dagger, but awkwardly (–2 test result penalty).

HAMMER: Dwarves favour the war-hammer, a shaped head of metal on a wooden shaft. Orcs and Trolls, and some strong Men, use it as well.

JAVELIN: A short spear designed for throwing, this is a Medium weapon that a crafty person can hide beneath a cloak or the like.

MACE: Like unto a hammer, a mace has a heavy metal head —sometimes a spiked ball—mounted on a thick, wooden shaft.

MATTOCK: A tool for mining and delving that the Dwarves have adapted for use in war. It requires two hands to use but delivers powerful, deadly blows that can shear through armour with ease.

PIKESTAFF: A weapon with a long, thick shaft and a large, sharp metal head like a larger spear, often used by footmen to defend lines and walls.

SPEAR: This weapon has a long, wooden shaft, usually of ash or oak, topped by a dagger-like head of sharp steel. Horsemen and knights, particularly the Rohirrim, favour it.

STAFF: A long, stout stick of wood, similar in some ways to a club but capable of swifter and more precise use.

STONE: While few warriors consider a stone a weapon, in the hands of a Hobbit, or a strong, skilled Man, it can cause great harm.

SWORD, LONGSWORD: The typical sword found among the warriors of Middle-earth, this has a long, straight blade. Andúril, Gúthwinë, and Herugrim, among others, are longswords.

SWORD, LONGSWORD, ORC: Uruks use longswords as well, though theirs are somewhat shorter, broader-bladed, and of obvious Orc-make.

SWORD, SCIMITAR: Most Orcs, and the Haradrim as well, favour this weapon, a sword of similar length to a longsword, but with a slightly curved blade and but one edge.

SWORD, SHORT SWORD: Called an *eket* by the Dunedain, for whom it is a primary infantry weapon, this blade is a foot to a foot and a half long—of greater length than a long knife but shorter and broader-bladed than a longsword.

WHIP: A long, braided leather thong, sometimes studded with sharp bits of iron, used mainly by Orcs to drive slaves and torture prisoners. It can only damage unarmoured flesh. Warriors protected by mail do not feel its sting.

WEAPON SIZE

As noted in the Weapons Table, all weapons have a size: Small, Medium, or Large. Generally, the larger the weapon, the more damage it can do. However, larger weapons have two drawbacks. First, they are more difficult to conceal. See the description of Conceal (page 122) for some examples. Second, larger weapons weigh more and are more awkward to carry, creating a greater burden for those who use them. Roughly speaking, a Small weapon weighs less than a pound, a Medium weapon weighs one to five pounds, and a Large weapon weighs five to ten pounds.

Shorter folk—Dwarves and Hobbits—cannot use Large weapons. To them, a Small weapon counts as Medium, and a Medium as Large, for purposes of concealment. The damage they inflict does not change however.

Tall, strong folk, such as Trolls, can craft and use even larger versions of Medium and Large weapons. A Troll (or like) version of a Medium weapon does +4 damage, and a Troll version of a Large weapon does +2 damage. Men and Noldorin Elves can use Medium Troll-weapons if they have a Strength of 14 or greater, but at a –3 test result penalty to hit due to awkwardness. No other peoples can use them at all.

ARMOUR

'Now men came bearing raiment of war from the king's hoard, and they arrayed Aragorn and Legolas in shining mail.'
— The Two Towers

To protect themselves from the blades of their enemies, warriors and heroes wear shining mail and carry stout shields. As with weapons, some armour comes only from certain people and places. Dáin's folk possess the skill to make a fine, metal mesh unlike any other in Middle-earth, for example.

Each time an attack inflicts damage to a character, his or her armour absorbs a number of points of that damage, reducing the amount that gets passed on as injury by the same amount. See Chapter Nine for more information.

ARMOUR TYPES

CHAINMAIL: A mesh of linked metal rings, worn over padding. It was first contrived long ago by the Dwarves of Belegost. Some warriors favour a simple shirt or short corslet of mail— enough to protect the chest, waist, and upper arms—while knights prefer a full hauberk that covers almost the entire body.

CHAINMAIL, DWARF: Dwarves make two types of mail that are superior to other types. One has thicker metal rings and so is heavier but offers greater protection (as listed in the table). Only Dwarves can bear the burden of it.

The other protects like normal mail, but is finer and more flexible, easier and lighter to wear. It only weighs 25 pounds. The mail of Númenor of old offered like protection to Dwarf-mail and without the greater weight, but it and the skill of making it are long lost.

CHAINMAIL, ORC: Orcs sometimes scavenge mail from those they kill, but they also craft their own. Their mail is stronger than the mail of Men, but heavier and harder to wear as well. Any who wear it suffer a –1 penalty to all Nimbleness-based tests.

CHAINMAIL, *MITHRIL*: Should a warrior have the fortune to acquire a *mithril* corslet like Frodo's, he is lucky indeed, for it offers the greatest protection one can wear and is light and comfortable as well as of great beauty.

CHAINMAIL WITH PLATES: Also known as plate mail. Some knights and other warriors augment their chainmail with a few plates of shining steel: vambraces (to cover the lower arms), pauldrons (to protect the shoulders), gorget (around the throat), jambes (for the lower legs), and the like.

LEATHER: A jerkin of stout leather may be worn as armour by Orcs, Hobbits, and those who do not wish the greater burden of mail. Good leather clothes may even, at times, offer 1 point of protection.

SCALE MAIL: The warriors of the Haradrim wear corslets of small, overlapping brazen plates for protection. Though not as strong as steel mail, this armour is lighter and more comfortable to wear in the fierce Southron sun.

SHIELDS: Many warriors carry shields of wood or metal to provide additional protection. They vary in size (the shields that some Men carry would provide complete cover for a Halfling) and shape (oblong, round, and the like). Shields have two effects. First, they provide a test result bonus (+5 for a large shield, +3 for a small shield) for parry/block attempts. Second, those who attack the bearer suffer a test result penalty of a similar amount: –5 for a large shield or –3 for a small shield.

TABLE 8.3: ARMOUR & SHIELD

ARMOUR TYPE	WEIGHT	DAMAGE ABSORBED*	PRICE**
Leather	10 lbs.	2	2 SP
Scale mail	20 lbs.	4	4 SP
Chainmail, ordinary	30 lbs.	5	5 SP
Chainmail, Dwarf	40 lbs.	7	7 SP
Chainmail, *mithril*	25% normal	+10 to chainmail's value	Priceless
Chainmail, Orc	35 lbs.	6†	6 SP
Chainmail with plate	+5 lbs.	+1 to chainmail's value	+1 SP

*: Corslets are shown here. A full hauberk absorbs +1 point of damage, but wearers suffer a −1 penalty on all Nimbleness-based tests.

**: Prices are for corslets.

†: Wearers suffer a −1 penalty on all Nimbleness-based tests. A full hauberk absorbs +1 point of damage, but wearers suffer a total of −2 on all Nimbleness-based tests.

SHIELD TYPE	WEIGHT	PARRY BONUS/ATTACK MODIFIER	PRICE
Shield, Large	5–12 lbs.	+5 to parry/−5 to ranged attacks	2 SP
Shield, Small	4–8 lbs.	+3 to parry/−5 to ranged attacks	1 SP

Weight: How heavy the weapon is, used for movement purposes.

Damage Absorbed: The number of points of damage the armour absorbs from each attack.

Parry Bonus/Attack Modifier: When the character uses this shield, add the first number to his attempts to parry an incoming attack. Apply the second number to ranged attacks made against the character.

OTHER GEAR

Characters embarking on adventures may want to take more with them than just weapons and armour. While contending with the servants of the Enemy, they may need such things as horses, food, rope, firewood, torches, blankets, wine, and the like. Some of these things they can, at times, find for themselves in the Wild, but others they must obtain in advance.

The accompanying table lists the value of various items of gear commonly used by adventurers and travellers. For locations not mentioned, the Narrator can come up with an equivalent value. Furthermore, all prices are approximate. Local conditions or the quality of the goods may change prices (for good or ill) drastically. Also, when in need, characters may have to pay much more for something than it is worth, as Frodo and company found out when trying to purchase a pony in Bree.

Of course, characters can acquire gear in other ways. If they have the time and the appropriate skills, they may be able to make what they need. Or if they have the aid of a powerful or wealthy Ally or patron, such as Elrond, he may grant them their needs. In any case, don't let your chronicle get too bogged down in issues about weapons and gear. This is a game about bold, heroic adventure and a fight against ultimate Evil, not a logistics exercise.

TABLE 8.4: GEAR

ITEM	PRICE (SHIRE/BREE)	PRICE (DALE)	PRICE (MINAS TIRITH)	WEIGHT
BEASTS AND VEHICLES				
Boat	2 sp	1 sp, 20 cp	1 sp, 30 cp	75 lbs.
Cart	2 GP	2 GP	2 GP	—
Horse, riding	2 SP	2 SP	1 SP, 2 sp	—
Horse, war	4 SP	4 SP	3 SP	—
Pony	1 SP	1 SP	3 sp	—
Saddle and tack	1 sp	1 sp	1 sp	20 lbs.
Waggon	4 GP	4 GP	4 GP	—
FOOD AND DRINK				
Ale, mug	10 cp	15 cp	15 cp	—
Food, fine, 1 week	1 sp	1 sp, 20 cp	1 sp, 20 cp	—
Food, ordinary, 1 week	40 cp	50 cp	50 cp	15 lbs.
Food, travel rations, 1 week	20 cp	25 cp	25 cp	8 lbs.
Meal at an inn, fine	1 sp, 20 cp	1 sp, 50 cp	1 sp, 50 cp	—
Meal at an inn, ordinary	60 cp	75 cp	75 cp	—
Pipeweed, one pouch	50 cp	2 sp	2 sp	.2 lb.
Wine, Dorwinion, per glass	80 cp	50 cp	65 cp	—
Wine, ordinary, per glass	20 cp	20 cp	25 cp	—
Wine, Dorwinion, per skin	1 SP	3 sp	3 sp, 25 cp	3 lbs.
Wine, ordinary, per skin	1 sp	1 sp	1 sp, 25 cp	3 lbs.
LODGING				
Inn, fine, one night's stay	1 sp	1 sp	1 sp	—
Inn, ordinary, one night's stay	50 cp	50 cp	50 cp	—
MISCELLANEOUS				
Blanket	30 cp	30 cp	30 cp	3 lb.
Clothes, fine, 1 suit	2 sp	2 sp	2 sp	5 lbs.
Clothes, ordinary, 1 suit	1 sp	1 sp	1 sp	3 lb.
Clothes, travelling, 1 suit	1 sp	1 sp	1 sp	4 lbs.
Clothes, very fine, 1 suit	4 sp	4 sp	4 sp	6 lbs.
Dwarven magical toys	3 cp	1 cp	3 cp	.1 lb.
Lantern	50 cp	40 cp	50 cp	2 lb.
Rope, 50′	50 cp	50 cp	40 cp	12 lb.
Torch	10 cp	10 cp	10 cp	1 lb.

Chapter Nine

GOOD WORDS AND TRUE

> *'[T]hey liked to have books filled with things that they already knew, set out fair and square with no contradictions.'*
>
> — *The Fellowship of the Ring*

When characters try to hide from marauding Orcs, slay dragons, or find hidden treasure, the rules of the game dictate how the Narrator must determine the outcome of their attempt. The rules describe what type of test to use, how many dice to roll, and how to interpret the result.

This chapter features the entire CODA SYSTEM rules for resolving character actions, ranging from simple timekeeping to deeper matters such as battles, journeying, and injuries. It contains everything the Narrator needs to know to resolve the actions and situations occurring in your *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* adventures.

TIME

> *'The hobbits had been nearly two months in the House of Elrond, and November had gone by with the last shreds of autumn...'*
>
> — *The Fellowship of the Ring*

Time holds sway over even the most powerful kings and wisest wizards, as one of Gollum's riddles cleverly observed. If an army comes not to the rescue of a besieged city in time, disaster befalls. If a warrior does not begin his quest soon enough, he finds his enemies closing in before he can reach his goal. Time plays a crucial role in many game adventures.

Within the game, the passage of time breaks down into five abstract intervals: action rounds, scenes, chapters, chronicles, and interludes.

The CODA SYSTEM Rules

ACTION ROUND

Action rounds (also called rounds) are the smallest increment of time in *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*. An action round represents about 6 seconds—the amount of time needed to avoid a sword-blow, draw your own weapon, and counterattack. Much of the drama in *The Lord of the Rings* revolves around bold and deadly moments of action, so whenever the characters perform fast-paced feats one after another, the story moves in sequential rounds. An action round defines the exact number of actions a person can perform, depending on his 'action allowance.' See 'Actions,' on the next page, for more information.

SCENE

Scenes are increments of time of varying length that present the characters with a particular objective or serve a particular purpose in the overarching story line, such as introducing an enemy, presenting a challenge, or giving the characters a chance to find the clues they need to continue their adventure. Scenes can last from several minutes to an hour or more, depending on the setting and circumstances. They end when the goal is achieved or they have served their purpose. The characters then move on to the next scene. For example, a scene might involve travelling across Eregion, debating with Saruman, or fighting with a pack of werewolves.

CHAPTER

A *chapter* can, much like chapters in *The Lord of the Rings*, span any amount of game time, from several hours or days to even weeks or months. Composed of a dozen or more scenes, plus narrative interludes between them as needed to advance the story, a chapter fills one or more game sessions. A sample chapter might begin when the characters set out from Rivendell to reach Erebor, and it may end several weeks later, when the characters arrive at the Lonely Mountain after many adventures.

CHRONICLE

A *chronicle* consists of two or more chapters: a sequence of adventures, often ending in an important milestone in the characters' lives. For example, a chronicle might include a journey to a far-off realm, learning about the customs of the people who live there, a few skirmishes, and a final chapter depicting a major battle between the Enemy and the forces of the West.

INTERLUDE

Narrators use *interludes* when describing events beyond the first-hand experience of the PCs or to account for ordinary activities that don't warrant detailed narration, such as uneventful travel through Eriador. In other words, they represent time that elapses 'off camera.' Generally, the Narrator inserts interludes between scenes and chapters to gloss over what occurs between pivotal scenes and to convey a sense of how much time has passed since the last dramatic event. She can even provide important information through interludes, but only when such information or events come to the characters automatically, without requiring specific choices and tests. Scenes and action rounds exist to handle those situations.

ACTIONS

'Aragorn picked up Frodo where he lay by the wall and made for the stair, pushing Merry and Pippin in front of him.'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

In *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*, characters accomplish things by attempting and performing *actions*. An action represents a singular feat such as running down a hall, attacking an Orc with a sword, or climbing a cliff. You can often assume that many of the actions a character attempts automatically succeed. In other words, they don't require any type of dice test to determine success. Walking, conversation, picking up an object, chopping down a tree, characters can automatically do these sorts of things in most circumstances without worrying about failing.

Other actions require tests. Crossing a narrow ledge, finding and following a trail, lifting a fallen Troll's body to free an injured companion, these actions often prove challenging to the average PC and require specific dice tests to determine his success or failure. Moreover, these feats represent actions that prevent the character from performing other activities at the same time. While a magician can explore a strange area and lecture his friends on a related subject simultaneously, he might not have sufficient focus to remember a spell in a northern Orc-tongue while fleeing from a pack of Wargs.

In fact, many of the actions characters attempt translate better into a series of sequential actions, such as drawing, aiming, and firing a bow. While this looks like a single fluid motion when pictured in your mind, these three acts represent separate actions in game terms, since failure at any one of them could have specific, dangerous consequences for the character. To handle such feats in the game, the Narrator needs to break them down into manageable actions which occur one after another in sequential action rounds. Determining what a character can and cannot do in a round, then letting him decide what he wish to attempt, is one of the things that makes the game so fun and challenging to play.

ACTION TIME VERSUS NARRATIVE TIME

During a game session, the Narrator and the players together establish the pace at which events transpire. At first, she sets the pace by describing events that have already occurred and presenting the current circumstances to which the players can respond. Depending on what the PCs do, she may handle each action one by one, calling for tests where necessary to determine the result of independent actions. Or she may simply jump forward in time to describe the eventual outcome of the characters' actions. These two different modes of handling the story action call for distinct methods of handling action in game time: breaking events down into 'action time' or maintaining more fluid pacing in 'narrative time.'

Action rounds are useful for determining whether one character can initiate an action before another or finish a task before another event begins. Although action time moves swiftly, round after round, it takes longer to play through a short period of a chapter using action time because players make lots of tests and the Narrator must describe what transpires during every six-second round. Action rounds represent the default manner for handling combat encounters and other fast-paced action sequences.

In contrast, narrative time advances the story line much more rapidly by enabling the Narrator to jump ahead to important events and gloss over the intervening 'down time.' Narrative time is the default method for recounting most events that occur in a scene or chapter, as well as for resolving game tests made to perform extended actions lasting minutes, hours, or days, such as researching an obscure point of lore in the archives of Gondor.

The rest of this section presents an assortment of actions that characters commonly perform during game chapters. These actions fall into one of several categories, including movement actions (running, diving, climbing), combat actions (aiming, shooting, striking a blow), free actions (dropping an object, issuing a command), and full-round actions (searching for a concealed object, deciphering an unknown script). Within each category, the action descriptions tell you:

(a) the intended effects,

(b) the type of dice test required (if any), and

(c) the action cost of performing the deed.

MOVEMENT ACTIONS

> *'"Now for the last race!" said Gandalf. "If the sun is shining outside, we may still escape. After me!"'*
>
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

During a round, a character may perform any of the movement actions listed on Table 9.1. Each movement option requires the character to spend at least one action to achieve the desired effect. See 'Movement and Encumbrance,' pg. 216, for more information.

PACE

Characters always move at one of the following *paces*.

WALK: A normal, brisk walk (2–6 yards per action, or approximately 3 miles per hour) requires a single movement action.

JOG: A jog (7–12 yards per two actions, or approximately 6 miles per hour) requires 1 movement action.

RUN: A run (13–18 yards per round, or approximately 9 miles per hour) requires 1 action and may require a test if the character is in combat. See the Sample Movement Actions Table, below.

SPRINT: A sprint (19–40 yards per round, or approximately 12 miles per hour) normally constitutes a full-round action and may require a test if the character is in combat. See the Sample Movement Actions Table, below. Characters carrying a very heavy load (see Table 9.2) cannot sprint.

These paces apply when characters use *tactical* movement—movement during combat, other forms of physical conflict, and situations where precise measuring of movement is important. For casual situations—when performing tasks where every second isn't critical, such as exploring a ruined tower—multiply the yards per action (or round) by 10 to find out how many yards the character can move per minute. For long journeys and other types of overland travel, see 'Travelling,' page 251.

ACTION ALLOWANCE

A character can perform two actions per round. The CODA SYSTEM refers to this limit as the character's action allowance (or 'allowance' for short). Certain order abilities and traits may increase a character's action allowance, thereby enabling him to perform additional actions each round. For example, a warrior with the Swift Strike special ability can gain the benefit of one additional combat action per round. As a result, he may take three actions (two base, plus one for his order ability) per round, provided at least one of them is a combat action.

A character may perform all of his actions at once or perform one and delay using the other(s) until later in the round.

TABLE 9.1: SAMPLE MOVEMENT ACTIONS

ACTION	COST	EFFECT	TEST
Crawl/Step	1	Move 2 yards	No test
Walk	1	Move 6 yards	No test
Jog	1	Move 12 yards	No test
Run	1	Move 18 yards	Run (TN5+)†
Sprint	Full round	Move 40 yards	Run (TN10+)†
Swim	1	Move 2 yards	Swim (TN5+)
Jump	1	Move 1 yard vertical, 2 yards horizontal	Jump (TN5+)†
Climb	1	Move 1 yard vertical or horizontal	Climb (TN5+)†
Drop prone	1	Become prone	No test
Stand up	1	Stand from prone	Nimbleness (TN5+)†

†: A test is required only if the character is engaged in combat or attempts to move farther than normally allowed by the action. If the moving character is involved in a combat situation, test TNs normally increase by +5. If the test is failed, the character can only move up to half his maximum intended move. With a disastrous failure, the character trips and falls prone.

TABLE 9.4: SAMPLE FREE ACTIONS

ACTION	COST	EFFECT	TEST
Command	0	Issue a several-word command	No test†
Drop Object	0	Drop item/weapon to ground	No test†
Observe	0	Notice something	Observe (TN variable)
Target	0	Acquire a new target in combat	No test†
Warn/Alert	0	Shout warning/sound alert	No test†

†: Environmental factors such as obscuring haze, choking smoke, or loud noise may warrant tests for specific actions.

TABLE 9.3: SAMPLE COMBAT ACTIONS

ACTION	COST	EFFECT	TEST
Aim	1	+1 bonus to subsequent Close Combat attack +3 bonus to subsequent Ranged Combat attack	No test No test
Armed attack	1	Attack with melee weapon	Attack test (TN is target's Defence)
Dodge	1	Dodge incoming attack	Swiftness reaction test (TN opposed)
Draw weapon	1	Draw weapon	No test
Ranged attack	1	Attack with ranged weapon	Attack test (TN is target's Defence)
Recover weapon	1	Pick up dropped weapon	No test
Reload	1	Ready another arrow	No test
Unarmed attack	1	Punch, kick, grapple, and so on	Attack test (TN is target's Defence)
Parry/block	1	Deflect incoming attack	Attack test (TN opposed)

TABLE 9.2: ENCUMBRANCE AND MOVEMENT

LOAD (IN POUNDS)	MOVEMENT PENALTY
Average burden (up to Str x 10)	None
Heavy burden (Str x 11-20)	3/4 normal pace
Very Heavy burden (Str x 21-30)	1/2 normal pace; cannot sprint

TABLE 9.5: FULL-ROUND ACTIONS

BASIC FULL-ROUND ACTIONS

ACTION	COST	EFFECT	TEST
Hide	F/R	Hide in cover or shadows	Stealth (TN variable)
Inspirational speech	F/R	Inspire others with words	Inspire (TN variable)
Search	F/R	Search 1 yard x 1 yard area	Search (TN variable)

EXTENDED FULL-ROUND ACTIONS

ACTION	COST	EFFECT	TEST
Perform healing	F/R ext.	Treat wounds	Healing (TN variable)
Repair weapon	F/R ext.	Fix damaged weapon	Smithcraft (TN variable

RACE AND PACE

The rules on page 214 cover the movement rates for Men, Elves, Orcs, and other creatures or races of similar height. The shorter peoples have shorter legs and thus move a bit more slowly. Hobbits and Dwarves move at two-thirds (67%) of the normal rates, rounded to the nearest yard.

MOVEMENT AND ENCUMBRANCE

A character can carry his Strength x 10 pounds as an average load. He can carry up to twice that amount (Str x 20) as a heavy burden, and three times that (Str x 30) as a very heavy load.

Characters suffer penalties to their movement rates when carrying heavy or very heavy loads, as shown on Table 9.2. These penalties compound with any penalties for race.

COMBAT ACTIONS

'Ahead near the walls Elfhelm's men were among the siege-engines, hewing, slaying, driving their foes into the fire-pits.'

— The Return of the King

During a round, a character may perform combat actions such as the ones listed on Table 9.3. See page 228 for descriptions of these actions.

FREE ACTIONS

During a round, a character may perform the free actions listed on Table 9.4. Free actions do not cost any action expenditures and may be conducted simultaneously with other actions. Of course, even 'free' actions can take up time if a character takes too many of them in a row or devotes too much of his attention to them. Whether this happens or not is the Narrator's decision.

FULL-ROUND ACTIONS

During a round, a character may perform a single full-round action instead of multiple, singular actions. Full-round actions include any number of deeds or feats the Narrator believes can be accomplished within the span of six seconds, such as tossing a burden into a waggon and then trying to ride away on the waggon quickly, or holding a door shut so others can escape before Orcs arrive. Generally, you should treat non-combat skill tests as full-round actions. Skill-based actions that require several full rounds to complete should be conducted as extended tests (see 'Test Variations: Extended Tests,' page 224).

PERFORMING ACTIONS: THE MULTIPLE-ACTION PENALTY

Most characters can perform two actions per round without suffering penalties for trying to do too much. Full-round actions requiring the character's complete attention are the exception. Each full-round action consumes the character's entire action allowance for the round, even if he has extra actions for some reason.

If a character tries to perform more actions than his allowance, he suffers a −5 penalty for each additional action attempted in excess of the allowance. This penalty is cumulative, so the first extra action is attempted at −5, the second at −10, and so forth.

ROUNDING

Unless you're specifically told otherwise, whenever you're asked to round a number—or you end up with a fraction or decimal that makes sense to round one way or the other—round it normally. That means that if the fraction is 1/2 or the decimal is .5 or higher, round up. Otherwise, round down.

For example, if a warrior with a longbow and a standard allowance of two actions attempts to draw, aim, and fire in a single round, the attack test for firing the bow (the third action) suffers a –5 test result penalty.

The accumulation of the multiple-action penalty makes succeeding at three additional actions extremely difficult. To save time, the Narrator can simply forbid characters to attempt more than twice their normal action allowance per round.

TESTS

'"As Aragorn has begun, so we must go on. We must push Sauron to his last throw."'

— Gandalf, The Return of the King

In *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game,* the outcome of a character's actions depends on the result of *tests.* A standard test consists of rolling 2d6, adding the character's corresponding attribute modifier and skill level—and any other relevant modifiers—and comparing the final *test result* to a target number (TN) determined by the action's difficulty. The amount by which the test result exceeds or misses the TN determines the overall degree of success or failure of the test.

TEST DIFFICULTY

A test's *difficulty* establishes the severity of the challenge posed by the action the character attempts, ranging from Simple to Virtually Impossible. Climbing a ladder in a tower represents an easier test than scaling a sheer cliff face without proper gear, just as lifting a 10-pound sword is easier than wresting a *mithril* helm from the clutches of a dying Dwarf.

TARGET NUMBERS

To determine the difficulty for a particular test, the Narrator must first decide what general difficulty category the action belongs to: Simple, Routine, Challenging, Difficult, or Virtually Impossible. The difficulty category tells the Narrator the base *target number* (TN) for the character's test. The accompanying table reveals average TNs for each difficulty category. The attribute and skill descriptions in earlier chapters provide specific TNs covering typical game situations.

TABLE 9.7: STANDARD TARGET NUMBERS (TNs)

DIFFICULTY	BASE TN
Simple	5
Routine	10
Challenging	15
Difficult	20
Virtually Impossible	25

After the Narrator determines the base TN, she must consider any factors that might increase or decrease the overall difficulty, and then modify the base TN accordingly. The attribute and skill descriptions in this book offer some guidelines for various tasks, and the section on 'Test Modifiers' (see pg. 218) provides additional suggestions. For example, performing actions in adverse lighting, inclement weather, without sufficient tools or equipment, or without enough time usually increases the TN of a test. On the other hand, taking extra time or performing a task under ideal conditions can significantly lower the TN of an

TABLE 9.6: TEST CATEGORIES SUMMARY

PHYSICAL TESTS

ATTRIBUTE TESTS: Strength, Nimbleness, Vitality, Perception.

REACTION TESTS: Swiftness, Stamina.

SKILL TESTS: Acrobatics, Armed Combat, Climb, Conceal, Craft, Games, Healing, Jump, Legerdemain, Observe, Ranged Combat, Ride, Run, Seacraft, Search, Siegecraft, Smithcraft, Stealth, Stonecraft, Survival, Swim, Teamster, Track, Weather-sense.

SOCIAL TESTS

ATTRIBUTE TESTS: Bearing.

REACTION TESTS: Willpower, Wisdom.

SKILL TESTS: Debate, Gaming, Inquire, Insight, Inspire, Intimidate, Perform, Persuade.

ACADEMIC TESTS

ATTRIBUTE TESTS: Wits, Perception.

REACTION TESTS: Wisdom.

SKILL TESTS: Appraise, Guise, Language, Lore.

action. The Narrator must use her judgment when evaluating an action, encounter, or scene, and alter the TN accordingly.

You'll notice that the base TNs are all divisible by five. As Narrator, you should attempt to maintain these TN divisions in your game—assigning random TNs defeats the purpose of the carefully balanced modifiers the designers have provided.

TEST MODIFIERS

The Narrator derives the base Target Number from the nature of an intended action and its estimated difficulty, but many circumstances can influence a specific test. Complicating factors include a variety of environmental conditions (rain or poor lighting), cultural biases (racial hatreds), material considerations (unsuitable equipment or insufficient resources), and so on. For this reason, the rules group all skill tests into one of three general categories—physical, social, and academic—according to the type of modifiers that commonly apply to them.

Except in unusual circumstances, few modifiers should apply to any individual test. The test difficulty guidelines set forth in this book already account for a number of factors that combine to establish base TNs for various tests. The Narrator should apply test modifiers conservatively, including only the most important ones.

TABLE 9.8: PHYSICAL TEST MODIFIERS

CONDITION*	TEST MODIFIER**
VISIBILITY & LIGHTING	
Clear visibility/ideal lighting	±0 TN
Dim lighting	±2 TN
Darkness	±5 TN
Light smoke/fog	±2 TN
Dense smoke/fog	±5 TN
Light rain	±1 TN
Heavy rain	±3 TN
EXTREME TEMPERATURE	
Temperate	±0 TN
Uncomfortable heat/cold	+2 TN
Extreme heat/cold	+5 TN
TERRAIN	
Flat/unobstructed terrain	±0 TN
Uneven/lightly obstructed terrain	±3 TN
Broken/heavily obstructed terrain	±5 to ±10 TN
On moving ship/boat	+2 TN
Slick surface/uncertain footing	+3 TN
Slippery surface/poor footing	+7 TN
Disadvantageous position	+3 to +9 TN
Advantageous position	*−3 to −6 TN*

EQUIPMENT MODIFIERS (FOR TESTS REQUIRING EQUIPMENT)	TEST MODIFIER
Adequately equipped	±0 TN
Inadequately equipped/using inferior tools	+5 TN
Using jury-rigged/makeshift tools	+10 TN
Totally unequipped	+15 TN
Character well-equipped/using superior tools	−5 TN

SIZE MODIFIERS	
Character is two sizes larger than target	+4 TN
Character is one size larger than target	+2 TN
Character and target are the same size	±0 TN
Character is one size smaller than target	−2 TN
Character is two sizes smaller than target	−4 TN

OTHER MODIFIERS	TEST MODIFIER
Off-hand penalty†	+8 TN

*: Characters making opposed tests against characters suffering the same modifiers need not factor modifiers into the test except in cases where relative modifiers favour one of the opponents.

**: ± indicates that the modifier is relative. For example, a character trying to hide in broken ground gains a benefit from cover (−5 TN), whereas a guard searching broken ground for an Orc archer suffers a penalty (+5 TN)

†: The off-hand penalty applies whenever a character relies on his non-dominant hand to perform a physical action.

PHYSICAL TEST MODIFIERS

' "Good tidings!" cried Éomer. "Even in this gloom hope gleams again. . . The accursed darkness itself has been a cloak to us." '

— The Return of the King

Physical test modifiers define the complications that might arise from abnormal physical, material, and environmental conditions. They apply to physical actions, such as Armed Combat, Observe, or Stamina tests. For example, searching in total darkness is much more difficult than searching in bright lighting. By the same token, searching for something on a flat, even surface is simpler than searching for something in an area obstructed by a great deal of clutter. In these instances, both lighting conditions and material considerations (obstructions) apply as modifiers made to physical tests.

For a list of common physical modifiers and their suggested test result modifiers, see Table 9.8. If multiple modifiers apply, apply them all together. Though combat tests and their modifiers are handled in greater detail later in this chapter (see page 230), as physical actions they can be influenced by these physical test modifiers too.

SIZE

It's harder for larger creatures to physically affect smaller ones. Conversely, it's easier for a smaller attack to affect a larger target. This holds true for all physical tests, from spotting someone to engaging in various forms of combat.

There are three levels of size that crop up in most situations: Small (from 0.6 to 1.5 yards in height), Medium (from there up to 2.5 yards in height), and Large (from there up to 5 yards in height). Most Hobbits and Dwarves are considered Small. Most Men and Elves are considered Medium.

While foes in the same size category don't have any size-related physical test modifiers, those of differing sizes do. Opponents of different sizes apply a ±2 TN modifier for each size category apart from each other they are. For example, a (Medium) Man trying to attack a (Small) Hobbit would suffer a +2 TN modifier. The same Hobbit repaying the favour to that Man would gain a –2 TN bonus.

While this makes it easier for smaller characters to hit and hurt larger foes, this is offset by the fact that smaller characters have fewer Wound Levels. Hobbits, for instance, have only four Wound Levels. Dwarves, due to their hardiness, have 1 more Wound Level than normal, giving them five.

SOCIAL TEST MODIFIERS

'Apparently the members of two or three quite different tribes were present, and they could not understand one another's orc-speech.'

— The Two Towers

Social test modifiers represent factors that affect abilities a character uses to interact with other persons, such as Bearing attribute tests, Persuade skill tests, and many Willpower reaction tests. By far, the most common social modifiers involve the disposition of the person the character attempts to influence. A character can more easily persuade a friendly listener with a plea for help than he can his enemies. This interaction stance, as well other common social modifiers and their suggested TN modifiers, appear on Table 9.9. If multiple modifiers apply, the

Narrator should apply them all together.

When using social skills, players should not simply roll dice and look for a result. Instead, they should roleplay the exchange, speaking and acting as their characters would. Players who roleplay well should receive bonuses for their tests. But don't penalize a player for poor roleplaying, unless he completely ruins his attempt, like revealing a lie when fast-talking a guard. Even a ham-handed attempt to contribute to the story should count for something.

TABLE 9.9: SOCIAL TEST MODIFIERS

CONDITION	TEST MODIFIER
INTERACTION STANCE	
Subject is loyal/devoted	−10 TN
Subject is friendly/pacifistic	−5 TN
Subject is indifferent	±0 TN
Subject is aggressive/unfriendly	+5 TN
Subject is hostile/violent	+10 TN
Subject speaks a different native language	±0 to +15 TN
Subject is the same race as character	±0 to −5 TN
Subject and character are of different races	±0 to +10 TN
Environmental factors make communicating difficult	+3 to +9 TN
Character demonstrates evidence or sincerity	−3 to −9 TN

ACADEMIC TEST MODIFIERS

While the base TN of most academic skill tests depends on the obscurity of the information a character tries to remember, academic test modifiers arise from circumstances that complicate his ability to recall, gather, or utilize lore. Wits attribute tests, Lore skill tests, and many Wisdom reaction tests are all examples of tests often subject to mental modifiers.

For a list of common mental modifiers and their suggested TN modifiers, see Table 9.10. If multiple modifiers apply, the Narrator should apply them all together.

TABLE 9.10: ACADEMIC TEST MODIFIERS

CONDITION	TEST MODIFIER
Character is situated in comfortable surroundings	±0 TN
Memory Loss	
Character suffers from mind-altering drug/toxin	+5 to +10 TN
Character suffers from selective amnesia	+3 to +9 TN
Character suffers from near total amnesia	+10 to +15 TN
Distractions	
Character is engaged in life-threatening situation	+5 to +10 TN
Character is surrounded by loud noise/talking	+3 to +6 TN
Character is affected by environmental factors	1/2 physical modifier

(see the PhysicalTest Modifiers Table)

TABLE 9.11: DEGREE OF SUCCESS

TEST RESULT	DEGREE OF SUCCESS OR FAILURE	TIME MODIFIER
11+ below TN	Disastrous Failure: The attempt makes matters worse if possible.	x 1.5
6–10 below TN	Complete Failure: The attempt fails and may prevent further attempts.	x 1
1–5 below TN	Failure: The attempt fails, but the character may try again with a cumulative −2 test result penalty, if appropriate.	x 1
Result = TN	Marginal Success: The character achieves the basic objective with, at worst, only minor complications or setbacks.	x 1
1–5 above TN	Complete Success: The character achieves his objectives with no setbacks whatsoever.	x 0.75
6–10 above TN	Superior Success: The character performs beyond expectations, possibly gaining an additional advantage such as reduced test duration.	x 0.5
11+ above TN	Extraordinary Success: The character performs far beyond expectations, possibly gaining an additional advantage such as a positive initiative modifier in the next round or the ability to perform an additional action at half the normal cost.	x 0.25

DEGREES OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE

Whereas TNs interpret difficulty by considering all relevant factors involved in the test, degrees of success evaluate the outcome of a character's efforts by comparing his final test result to the TN. In *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*, calculating the degree of success or failure for any test is simple. A test result that equals the TN is a marginal success. Every increment of 5 (or fraction thereof) above or below the TN represents one degree of success or failure, respectively. See Table 9.11 for more information.

Aside from qualifying a character's overall performance during a test, degrees of success and failure can also determine specific effects of abilities, skills, and traits. For certain character abilities and skills, the degree of success achieved determines how long an effect lasts or quantifies how much of a bonus or penalty a character gets when performing subsequent actions.

As the 'Time Modifier' column in the accompanying table shows, varying levels of success can affect how long it takes to perform test with a non-combat skill. A disastrous failure increases the time by 150%, wasting even more time than normal. A complete success allows a character to complete a task in three-quarters (75%) of the normal time. A superior success cuts the time in half (50%), and an extraordinary success cuts the time to only a quarter (25%) of normal. The Narrator may apply other appropriate effects from extra successes if she prefers.

If a character wishes to perform a task in less time than normal, all he has to do is achieve a higher level of success. He does not have to declare his intention to do so ahead of time, and doing so should not increase the difficulty of the action.

TEST TYPES

There are two primary types of tests: attribute tests and skill tests. While these tests share many common applications during play, each has its own rules to simulate the difference between using raw natural ability and using extensive education and training in disciplines such as Lore or Stonecraft.

ATTRIBUTE TESTS

'Two great trolls appeared; they bore great slabs of stone, and flung them down to serve as gangways over the fire.'

— The Fellowship of the Ring

All characters possess six defining attributes: Bearing, Nimbleness, Perception, Strength, Vitality, and Wits (see Chapter Two for details). Attribute levels (ranging from 1 to 12, sometimes higher) measure a character's personal endowment in each of these areas. Attribute levels translate into fixed attribute modifiers (ranging from −2 to +3, sometimes higher). When making an attribute test, add this modifier to the dice result.

Characters use attributes to accomplish actions based exclusively on their innate abilities. In other words, characters make attribute tests when they don't need skill to succeed at a particular effort or no skill applies to a given task. Lifting a heavy object, catching an item before it falls to the ground, and resisting the effects of some Orc poisons are all examples of attribute tests any character can attempt.

REACTION TESTS

Although characters generally make attribute tests when exercising their raw talents directly, many occasions require them to rely on their natural gifts to resist mental or social influence (such as intimidation or fear) or to survive physical ordeals (like attacks or disease). These types of attribute tests are called *reaction tests*, and they are adjusted by a character's specific reaction modifier (see Chapter Two of this book under 'Reactions'). There are four types of reaction tests—Stamina, Swiftness, Willpower, and Wisdom—each corresponding to a different pair of character attributes.

MAKING AN ATTRIBUTE TEST

To make an attribute test, roll 2d6 and add the character's corresponding attribute modifier (−2 to +3, sometimes higher). If you roll double sixes, you may roll another d6 and add it to the total result. If this die scores another 6, roll another die and add it, repeating this process until you roll something other than a 6. To this number, add any special modifiers resulting from your character's order abilities or traits, the circumstances, and so forth. In other words:

Attribute test result = 2d6 + attribute modifier + other modifiers

For example, if your character tries to force open a jammed door (TN 12), you would make a Strength attribute test by rolling 2d6 and adding your character's Strength modifier and any other applicable modifiers. Compare the final, modified test result against the TN established by the test difficulty to determine the degree of success or failure.

TABLE 9.12: SAMPLE REACTION TESTS

REACTION	TEST TYPE	REACTION	TN/OPPOSING TEST
Overcome fear	Standard	Willpower	Varies by degree
Resist intimidation, interrogation	Opposed	Willpower	Inquire, Intimidate
Resist charm, flattery	Opposed	Wisdom	Persuade
Resist rhetoric, propaganda	Opposed	Wisdom	Persuade
Detect lie or bluff	Opposed	Wisdom	Persuade
Withstand extreme temperature	Standard	Stamina	Varies by degree
Resist poison	Standard	Stamina	Varies by potency
Avoid disease	Standard	Stamina	Varies by potency
Ignore Weariness	Standard	Stamina	Varies by degree
Dodge melee attack	Opposed	Swiftness	Armed Attack
Dodge projectile	Opposed	Swiftness	Ranged Attack
Avoid injury while falling	Standard	Swiftness	Varies by distance fallen

Reaction tests function as either standard or opposed attribute tests (see Test Variants: Opposed Tests), except that the character substitutes his reaction level for his attribute modifier when determining the final test result.

SKILL TESTS

'"Alas! The wounds of this weapon are beyond my skill to heal."'
— Glorfindel,
The Fellowship of the Ring

The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game characters demonstrate a wide range of skills. In addition to the many skills anyone can possess, such as Observe or Run, characters also possess unique skills tied to their race, order, or individual pursuits. As with attributes, characters show different levels of achievement among their skills, measured by skill ranks. Skill ranks factor directly into skill tests much in the same manner that attribute modifiers affect attribute tests. When making a skill test, a character adds his full skill rank to the result rolled on the dice.

Characters rely on skills to accomplish tasks requiring some amount of education, training, or experience,

CONTESTS OF WILL

'[H]e saw that Denethor and Gandalf still looked each other in the eye, as if reading the other's mind. But it was Denethor who first withdrew his gaze.'
— The Return of the King

Characters often engage in a contest of wills to see whose authority, desires, or power hold sway in some matter. Similarly, one who would, like Aragorn, wrest a *palantír* from the control of Sauron must fight a battle of wills with the Dark Lord to do so. This becomes a prevailing theme in many of the important events of the War of the Ring, and we are witness to similar battles among the powerful throughout *The Lord of the Rings.*

To fight a contest of wills, the participating players determine initiative for their characters normally. Based on initiative, one character becomes the aggressor and the other becomes the defender. The participants then make an opposed test with the aggressor using his Bearing and the defender using his Willpower. The loser notes the loss by making a mark on some scratch paper. If the victor achieves a complete success, make one mark. If it is a superior success, make two marks. If it is an extraordinary success, make three marks. When one of the participants in the contest has a number of marks equal to or greater than his current Willpower, he loses the contest. He must acknowledge defeat in some way—typically by looking away or giving way—and, as appropriate, do what the victor wants.

A character does not have to enter a contest of wills. He can instead turn away, leave the presence of the challenger, or disdain the challenge in some manner.

such as sailing a ship, repairing damaged armour, or judging the value of goods. While requiring experience and training, these types of activities also draw on personal talents such as Wits, Nimbleness, or Bearing. For this reason, every skill links to a key character attribute, which bestows a corresponding attribute modifier upon the final test result.

Skill Specialties and Affinities

As described in Chapter Five, a character's specialties in a skill can affect a skill test by adding +2 to the test result. Likewise, appropriate affinities add +1 each.

Untrained Skill Use

While skills like Sea-craft represent abilities characters can only acquire through extensive training and experience, others—such as Observe or Persuade—involve general aptitudes and abilities anyone can exercise to some degree. When using such skills, characters may still make a skill test even if their rank in that skill is zero. This is called 'using a skill untrained.' Chapter Five of this book lists all of the skills characters may use untrained.

When making an untrained skill test, conduct the test normally, adding 0 when applying the character's skill rank. Attribute, trait, and special ability modifiers still apply, but apply a –2 test result penalty to reflect the character's unfamiliarity, lack of practice and experience. Untrained skills don't confer affinity bonuses, but characters may get affinity bonuses to untrained skill tests if they possess related skills at rank 1 or higher.

If a skill does not permit untrained usage but the character attempts to do something relating to this skill, the Narrator must determine whether the character can substitute another closely related skill or the action is impossible to perform without the required skill. If no other skills seem relevant, the Narrator might also consider an attribute test—typically using the attribute linked to the required skill—instead of disallowing the intended action outright. But in most circumstances, untrained characters automatically fail any test requiring a skill that does not permit untrained usage.

Impossible Tasks

Sometimes characters attempt to perform seemingly impossible actions. In these cases, the Narrator can allow the character to make an appropriate attribute or skill test but set the target number at 30 or higher. If the character has virtually no chance of meeting such a high TN, the Narrator may wish to lower difficulty to make it barely possible, particularly when the character's success is essential for the chapter to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

Alternatively, the Narrator can simply rule that an action is impossible unless the character expends one or more Courage to overcome the inherent difficulty. Using this method, the Narrator should set the TN at 30 and make the character perform the test, spending Courage as needed to increase the test result to a level of success.

Repeat Attempts

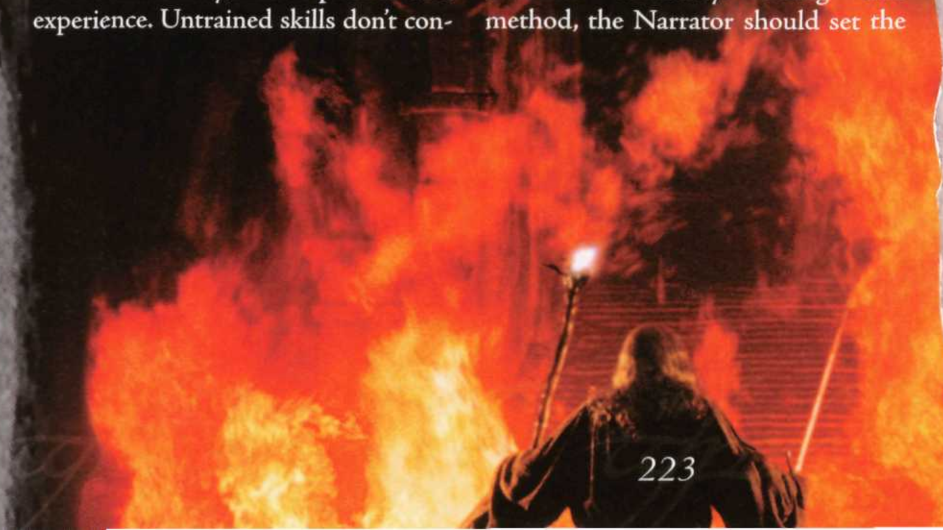
The nature of some tests, such as dodging a punch, precludes characters from making repeated attempts. Other tests, like trying to fix a damaged blade, may allow repeated attempts. A character can make repeated attempts to accomplish a task if (a) he has enough time to do so and (b) he doesn't botch any of the test attempts so badly as to ruin the potential for further endeavours. As a general rule, a character can retry failed attempts until he either suffers a disastrous failure or succeeds. For each additional attempt, impose a cumulative –2 test result penalty. Thus, the first re-try is at –2 TN, the second at –4 TN, and so forth.

MAKING A SKILL TEST

To make a skill test, roll 2d6. If you roll double sixes on the dice you can roll an additional d6 and add it to the result. If this die scores another 6, roll another die and add it, repeating this process until you roll something other than a 6. Add your character's skill rank and relevant attribute modifier, as well as any other modifiers resulting from abilities and traits. In other words:

Skill test result = 2d6 + skill rank + attribute modifier + other modifiers

The total of all dice and accumulated modifiers yields your final test result. Compare this to the TN of the skill test to determine degree of success or failure.



TEST VARIANTS

Regardless of type, some tests warrant special rules because of the nature of the challenge. The following entries list a few of the most common test variants players encounter in *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*.

OPPOSED TESTS

> *' "Do what you will; but I will hinder it, if I may." '*
> *— Éowyn, The Return of the King*

Whenever the success or failure of a character's actions depends largely on the performance of an opponent—such as in a foot race or wrestling match—the Narrator may call for an *opposed test*. Opposed tests differ from standard tests in that the Narrator does not set a TN for the test. Instead, the participants each make the specified test and compare their test results. Whichever character scores the higher result wins the test—and uses his opponent's test result to determine the degree of success or failure. Equal results indicate a tie. If the test represents a continuing contest, the characters can make additional tests to resolve the deadlock.

EXAMPLE: *Menelcar and Grór engage in an arm wrestling contest. The Narrator calls for Strength attribute tests. Menelcar gets a test result of 11, and Grór gets a test result of 7. Menelcar wins the opposed test, and since his test result exceeds Grór's by less than 5 but more than 0, he achieves a complete success and wins the contest. If Grór had also gotten an 11, the two would have tied, and the contest would have continued to the next round, when they could make another opposed test. The contest continues until one or the other beats his opponent's test result.*

Characters can use opposed tests for many different situations. See the skill descriptions in Chapter Five for some guidelines. For example, a guard pits his Observe against a thief's Stealth, a powerful captain trying to Intimidate his foes must contend with their Willpower, and two lords trying to sway their king's policy might use opposed Debate tests—and then compare the winning Debate test result to the king's Wisdom test.

In some situations, rather than have the opponents determine their test results simultaneously, the Narrator may have one of them make a test in advance, and then use his test result as the TN for the other character's test later in the chapter. For example, when a wily Dwarf tries to sneak goods into the city, the Narrator may require a Conceal test to determine how well hidden the goods are, noting the test result. Later, when a watchman searches the Dwarf's waggon, the Narrator uses the Conceal test result as the TN for the Search test. The Narrator decides what method to use based on the circumstances.

EXTENDED TESTS

Extended tests apply to complex and protracted actions. Repairing broken chainmail might constitute a single, standard Smithcraft test that takes a certain number of hours to complete. But dramatic circumstances might warrant conducting the repair as an extended test to account for different skills that come into play, complications that arise during the work, or time deadlines requiring careful monitoring of the character's progress.

For example, the Narrator might choose to treat a lengthy repair job as a series of different skill tests to represent different stages of the operation. The first stage might involve a Wits-based Smithcraft test to figure out exactly what's wrong with the armour and how best to repair it. The second step might involve a normal Smithcraft test to do the work itself. Lastly, an Armed Combat test allows the character to find out if his work fixed the problem.

To conduct this sort of test, the Narrator might establish three separate skill tests with the second and third stages requiring a successful test in the preceding stage before the character can continue. The TN of subsequent stages might depend on the degree of success of the action in the prior stage. An extraordinary success on the repair work in the above example makes it easier to evaluate the work with Armed Combat, for instance. Alternatively, the Narrator can group all three tests into one extended test, using the following guidelines to determine the final outcome by testing only a single skill.

TABLE 9.13: SAMPLE OPPOSED TESTS

SITUATION	CHARACTER'S TEST	OPPONENT'S TEST
Acting in disguise	Guise	Observe (Spot) or Wisdom
Bargaining	Debate (Bargain)	Debate (Bargain)
Competing at games	Gaming	Gaming
Dodging arrows	Swiftness	Ranged Combat
Foot race	Run	Run
Hiding	Stealth (Hide)	Observe (Spot)
Parry/block blow	Armed Combat	Armed Combat
Searching	Observe or Search	Stealth (Hide) or Conceal
Swimming rac	Swim	Swim

Resolving Extended Tests

To establish an extended test, first decide what attributes and skills play a role in the extended action. Second, break the test into a number of *stages,* or discrete time intervals (such as rounds, minutes, hours, or days), with each time interval typically requiring one test. Third, set a TN for each test roll, noting the individual tests' requirements. Fourth, add all the TNs together to determine an aggregate TN for the extended test.

As a player rolls each test sequentially, add the incremental test results together. When the individual test total exceeds the extended test TN, the character has completed his designated objective. If he fails a test, he does not reduce the aggregate TN, but he can usually try again (see below). If he suffers a complete failure or disastrous failure, the Narrator may increase the aggregate TN for the extended test (because the character did something wrong and made the job more difficult) or even forbid him to continue with the extended test (because the character has ruined the job altogether). If an extended test involves multiple attributes and skills, do not permit players to begin testing a new attribute or skill until they have surpassed the test TN for the current stage in the extended test.

The Narrator may specify that individual stages within an extended test are standard, combined, or opposed tests as circumstances dictate. Since almost all extended tests pertain to actions characters can repeat until successful, characters can retry failed attempts, though disastrous failure may bring work to a halt.

Count the number of individual tests (including all test rolls and retries) it takes for the character to accumulate a result in excess of the aggregate TN. Multiply the number of attempts by the established time interval for the test (say, 10 minutes). This determines how long it takes for the character to complete the extended test. Thus, characters can successfully complete an extended test quickly by scoring higher results on fewer tests, thereby shortening the total test time. But it may take characters much longer than expected if they roll poorly on individual tests and need numerous additional tests to meet the extended test TN.

Because extended tests translate a number of repeated tests into elapsed game time, they are especially useful for heightening the drama as characters race against the clock. Regardless of whether the characters are aware of a precise deadline, knowing they must complete an extended action quickly to avert impending disaster adds a great deal of suspense to their extended test results.

COMBINED TESTS

> *' "We must stop this rat-hole," said Gamling. "Dwarves are said to be cunning folk with stone.*
> *Lend us your aid, master!" '*
> *— The Two Towers*

Some challenges are so broad or encompassing that multiple characters may combine their efforts to confront the problem as a group. Examples might include a Stonecraft test to build or repair a wall, or a Search test to examine a large area for hidden treasure. To account for teamwork, the Narrator can allow characters to perform a particular test as a *combined test.* Combined tests work the same as standard attribute and skill tests with the following exceptions.

After the Narrator sets a TN for a combined test, the participants must designate one character as the leader or coordinator of the test. Every participant but the leader makes the test at a –5 TN to determine how effectively they contribute to the effort. A marginal or complete success provides the leader a +1 test result bonus, a superior success +2, and an extraordinary success +3. On the other hand, failure adds ±0, complete failure imposes a –1 test result penalty, and disastrous failure a –2 penalty. Add the bonuses and penalties together to obtain one modifier. Then the leader makes his test at the specified TN, adding the modifier obtained from the other characters. Use his test result to determine the group's success at the task.

Naturally, not all tests are conducive to team effort. For example, you can't fit a whole group of people into a narrow gully to try to build a dam across it. Furthermore, combined tests become problematic if the group of characters isn't accustomed to working in concert. If the Narrator determines that a combined test is possible but she has some doubt that particular characters can perform well as a group, she may impose negative modifiers to reflect that fact.

MERGING TEST VARIANTS

Depending on the circumstances, the Narrator can merge any of the aforementioned test variants to determine the outcome of the players' actions. Two teams of woodworkers competing to develop a new type of magical toy might become involved in an opposed, extended, combined test. Similarly, the Narrator might choose to conduct a footrace as just an extended, opposed test whereas a tug of war might represent a combined, opposed test. By merging test variants in this manner, the Narrator can simulate virtually any action involving any number of characters.

COMBAT

'Through the throat of one huge leader Aragorn passed his sword with a thrust; with a great sweep Boromir hewed the head off another.'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

Of all the action sequences typical to an adventure, combat scenes generally create the most dramatic tension because of the potential for physical injury and death. Although you can generally resolve combat actions as standard skill and attribute tests, combat tests are somewhat more involved in terms of the number and type of test modifiers and character options available.

TABLE 9.14: COMBAT ACTIONS AND MANOEUVRES

GENERAL ACTIONS	ACTION COST	TEST TYPE	COMMON MODIFIERS
Aim	1	None	None
Delay	0	None	None
Dodge	1	Swiftness	Close/Ranged Combat
Parry/Block	1	Opposed	Close Combat

ARMED MANOEUVRES	ACTIONCOST	TEST TYPE	COMMON MODIFIERS
Armed Attack, basic	1	Armed Combat	Close Combat
Armed Attack, blunt	1	Armed Combat	Close Combat
Armed Attack, defensive	1	Armed Combat	Close Combat
Armed Attack, power	1	Armed Combat	Close Combat
Armed Attack, precise	1	Armed Combat	Close Combat
Armed Attack, sweep	2	Armed Combat	Close Combat
Armed Attack, two-weapon	1	Armed Combat	Close Combat
Charge	2	Armed Combat	Close Combat
Ranged Attack	1	Ranged Combat	Ranged Combat

UNARMED MANOEUVRES	ACTION COST	TEST TYPE	COMMON MODIFIERS
Grab	1	Unarmed Combat	Close Combat
Punch/Kick	1	Unarmed Combat	Close Combat
Trip	1	Unarmed Combat	Close Combat

FREE ACTION

See Table 9.4. These have no action cost and have no modifiers.

FULL-ROUND ACTION

See Table 9.5 for details. The character must disengage from combat to perform these.

MOVEMENT

See Table 9.1 for applicable options, costs, tests, and modifiers.

COMBAT BASICS

The combat system presented in this book describes a variety of actions and tests used to simulate combat scenarios in the world of Middle-earth.

ACTION ROUNDS

When violence erupts, the Narrator should immediately begin describing events in terms of *action rounds,* each about six seconds long. All characters involved in the combat may take a number of actions equal to their action allowance each round. (See page 213 to determine a character's action allowance.) Although players may describe what their characters do in any amount of detail, the Narrator must interpret the actions in terms of the rules options available.

INITIATIVE

Initiative describes the order in which characters act during a round. To determine initiative, every active participant makes an 'initiative test,' which is conducted exactly like a Swiftness test. Characters act in order from highest to lowest initiative test results.

Typically, characters determine their initiative at the beginning of every round. Thus, the person who goes first in one round may find himself going last the next. Such are the vagaries of battle. For faster, easier play, the Narrator may prefer for characters to make one initiative test at the beginning of the combat, then use the results for every round in the combat.

SURPRISE

If a character is unaware of assailants or simply doesn't expect violence, an attacker may surprise him and automatically win initiative. To determine if a character is surprised, the Narrator can require his player to make an Observe test (TN 10, plus any applicable modifiers). Characters who succeed at the test may make normal initiative checks. Characters failing the test automatically lose both initiative *and* one action during the upcoming round.

ACTIONS IN COMBAT

When it's a character's turn to act, the player must describe what the character attempts to do. Typically characters perform one or more combat actions (see Table 9.14 for options), but they might instead disengage from combat to perform noncombat actions such as repairing armour, administering healing, or anything else a player wishes.

COMBAT ACTIONS

'Then Pippin stabbed upwards, and the written blade of Westernesse pierced through the hide and went deep into the vitals of the troll...'
— The Return of the King

The accompanying tables and text describe some of the more common actions performed during combat encounters. Narrators must determine the costs and test factors for any variations on these actions.

ATTACK TESTS

Attack tests are conducted as skill tests of the appropriate type: Armed Combat, Ranged Combat, or Unarmed Combat. See the skill descriptions in Chapter Five for more information about these skills.

ARMED ATTACK TESTS

When a character uses an Armed Combat skill to perform an attack with a weapon, he must make an Armed Combat skill test. The base difficulty of the attack test equals the target's Defence. Physical test modifiers and close combat test modifiers may apply. See the Physical Test Modifiers Table (page 218) and the Close Combat Modifiers Table (page 230) for details.

Scoring a marginal success or better indicates a successful attack. The attacker rolls the weapon's damage dice to determine the damage done by the attack, and thus the severity of injury resulting from the attack. Greater degrees of success indicate greater damage as well (see page 231). To avoid damage from a successful attack, the target may perform a dodge or parry/block action as an opposed test.

UNARMED ATTACK TESTS

When a character uses his body—fists, elbows, feet—to make an unarmed attack, he must make an Unarmed Combat skill test. The base difficulty of the attack test equals the target's Defence. Physical test modifiers and close combat test modifiers may apply. See the Physical Test Modifiers Table (page 218) and the Close Combat Modifiers Table (page 230) for details.

Scoring a marginal success or better indicates a successful attack. The attacker rolls the attack's damage dice to determine the damage done by the attack, and thus the severity of injury resulting from the attack. To avoid damage from a successful attack, the target may perform a dodge or parry/block action as an opposed test.

RANGED ATTACK TESTS

Just like with close combat attacks (armed and unarmed), the difficulty of a ranged attack is based on the target's Defence. See the Weapons Table (page 203) for weapon range increments. Physical test modifiers and ranged combat test modifiers may apply. See the Physical Test Modifiers Table (page 218) and the Ranged Combat Tests Table (page 230) for details.

Scoring a marginal success or better indicates a successful attack. The attacker rolls the weapon's damage dice to determine the damage done by the attack, and thus the severity of injury resulting from the attack. To avoid damage from a successful attack, the target may perform a dodge action as an opposed test.

Common Attack Actions

AIM: An aim action gives the attacker a +1 bonus with Armed Combat tests (and unarmed attacks) and a +3 bonus with Ranged Combat tests.

ARMED ATTACKS: To inflict damage with a melee weapon, such as an axe or sword, a character makes an Armed Combat test. Most such attacks cost one action, although the sweep and two-handed manoeuvres cost two. If successful, an attack inflicts damage based on weapon or attack type. See 'Inflicting Damage' for more information.

BASIC ATTACK: A standard strike with a weapon, in an attempt to slay the target.

BLUNT ATTACK: A strike with the flat of the blade or other blunt part of a weapon, to stun the opponent rather than kill him. See 'Inflicting Damage' for more information.

DEFENSIVE ATTACK: A character using this manoeuvre fights defensively, perhaps to gain the measure of his enemy. He suffers a –2 test result penalty to his attack, but receives a +2 bonus to his Swiftness for dodge and parry/block tests against the opponent he attacks. The dodge/parry bonus applies against that opponent until the character takes any action other than defensively attacking that foe or dodging/parrying his attacks.

POWER ATTACK: A character using this manoeuvre performs an all-out attack, ignoring the risk to himself in the hope of inflicting a greater injury on his foe. Anyone attacking him that round receives a +2 test result bonus to hit him, but he receives a +3 bonus to the damage he does if he hits. A power attack requires two actions.

PRECISE ATTACK: A character using this manoeuvre focuses on hitting his foe, not on inflicting the worst possible wound. He receives a +2 test result bonus to his attack roll, but suffers a –2 penalty to the damage total.

SWEEP: If two or three foes stand close together, a character can try to attack all of them with one action. Visually, this may consist of one great sweeping blow, a swift blow followed by an equally quick return stroke, or the like. He declares how many foes he wishes to attack (up to a maximum of three) and suffers a –2 test result penalty for each one (thus, –4 to attack two, –6 to attack three). He then makes a separate attack roll against each target, rolling damage separately for each one he hits. If one of the targets parries the attack, the character cannot make further attack rolls.

TWO-HANDED ATTACK: A character can use both hands to wield some weapons, such as axes and longswords, that only require one hand to use. This allows him to strike a more powerful blow, but at the cost of not being able to use a shield. A two-handed attack is similar to a power attack—attackers receive a +2 bonus to hit the character during the same round this manoeuvre is used—but the damage bonus is +4.

CHARGE: Charging permits a character to use his strength, mass, and momentum to deliver a particularly forceful attack after running a short distance. He must move at least three yards in that round and then make an Armed Combat test. He receives a +1 bonus to Armed Combat tests, but he suffers a –3 penalty to any dodge reactions or parries attempted during the same round. If his attack hits, he multiplies the damage he inflicts by 1.5 and forces the target to make a Strength attribute test (TN = charging character's Strength +2) to avoid being knocked prone. If the target attacks the charger that round—either during or after the charge—and the charger does not attempt to dodge or parry the attack, the target receives a +1 test result bonus to hit him.

A charge has an action cost of 2. It combines the cost of moving at up to a jog, plus a single attack, into one manoeuvre. Because he moves in a combat situation, the character must make a successful movement test (see Sample Movement Actions Table). A character cannot split the movement and the attack into subsequent rounds and still receive the benefits of a charge.

DELAY: Instead of acting in order of initiative, a character may delay his actions until he sees what other combatants are going to do. A character who has delayed one or more actions may interrupt any character acting in order of initiative and act before him. However, if two or more characters all have delayed actions, and then try to act simultaneously, their actions are resolved in order of their original initiative results.

DODGE: In response to any close or ranged attack, a character may dodge to attempt to avoid injury. Dodging costs 1 action, and you must declare your dodge action prior to the attacker rolling his skill test. The attacker then makes the appropriate skill test. If successful, the attacker's test result becomes the TN for the target's dodge action, conducted as a Swiftness reaction test. With a successful Swiftness test, the defender dodges the attack and avoids all damage.

If the attacker's attack test fails, no Swiftness reaction test need be made. The defender defers the roll until he is successfully hit within the same combat round. Declared dodges that remain unused—either because remaining attackers fail to successfully hit or no further attacks are made—are lost.

Once a dodge action has been declared, the action applies to all attack tests made in the current round. Thus, a character who declares a dodge but does not make a Swiftness reaction test (because the first attacker failed his test) still gains the benefit of the declared dodge for attack tests made later in the round. If the dodge action is successful, this test result becomes the new base TN to hit the dodging character for the rest of the round. Finally, the defender can use additional dodge actions in a single round in an attempt to improve his chances of being missed.

EXAMPLE: *An Orc rolls a Close Combat test to hack at Menelcar with a sword. Christian declares a dodge action. The Orc fails his attack test. A second orc steps up and takes a swing at Menelcar, though, and hits with an 11. Christian now makes a Swiftness test for his previously declared dodge action, and he gets a 12. Menelcar dodges out of the way. The dodge test result (12) becomes the base TN to hit Menelcar for any other Orcs who care to try their luck later this round.*

A character can use delayed actions to perform a dodge action. He can even dodge if he has already used up his action allowance, but he suffers a –5 test result penalty per additional action required. In response to an attack, a character can declare a dodge action prior to his turn, though this counts toward his action allowance for the round.

GRAB: This unarmed attack action allows a character to get a hold on an enemy. He makes an Unarmed Combat skill test to hit the target. If he succeeds, he grabs the target, who now suffers a +5 TN modifier to any action tests other than trying to break free. The Narrator may rule that certain actions are impossible instead.

The attacker keeps hold of the target until he releases the target or breaks free. To break free, the grabbed character must use 1 action to win an opposed Strength test against the attacker. While the attacker still has a hold on the target, he may do any of the following as an attack action with a cost of 1, but without having to make any test:

- Squeeze or throttle the target for 1d6 damage (plus Strength modifier).
- Actively maintain the hold. If the defender tries to break free this round, the attacker gets a +3 bonus to the opposed Strength test.
- Throw the character to the ground or against a wall. This does 1d6 damage (plus Strength modifier) if the character wishes, or he can simply maintain the hold, but at no bonus.

PUNCH/KICK: This is the standard form of unarmed attack. It inflicts 1d6+2 damage (plus Strength modifier).

PARRY/BLOCK: In close combat, a character may attempt to block an unarmed attack or parry an armed attack to avoid injury. Resolving a parry or block works just like resolving a dodge action. Blocking or parrying costs 1 action, and you must declare your action prior to the attacker rolling the skill test. The attacker then makes the appropriate skill test. If successful, the attacker's modified test result becomes the TN for either an Armed or Unarmed Combat test by the defender, for a parry or block respectively. With a successful Armed or Unarmed Combat test, the defender thwarts the incoming attack and avoids all damage. Unlike dodge actions, however, parrying or blocking only applies to a single incoming attack.

RANGED ATTACK: Characters use this standard attack action to fire arrows, throw knives, or make other attacks at range.

TRIP: This unarmed attack action allows a character to trip or unbalance a foe, making his opponent fall to the ground. This requires a Nimbleness test, which the target can automatically oppose with his Nimbleness or Swiftness (his choice) at an action cost of 0 and no multiple-action penalty. If the attacker succeeds, his enemy falls, taking no damage but suffering the penalties for being prone (see the Close Combat Modifiers Table) until he gets up. Getting to one's feet requires one action.

NON-COMBAT ACTIONS: If characters attempt non-combat actions in combat, conduct the tests normally, but pay special attention to the amount of time (measured in action rounds) needed to complete the intended action. Depending on his proximity to the conflict, a character disengaged from combat might be interrupted by combat participants. In such cases, the Narrator must determine whether injury, evasion, or any other type of distraction affects a non-combat action in progress and, if so, to what extent.

COMBAT MODIFIERS

Many different factors can affect how well a character performs in combat. The most common of these are listed in the following sections.

Close Combat

'But Náin was half blind with rage, and also very weary with battle, whereas Azog was fresh and fell and full of guile.'
— The Return of the King

Armed and Unarmed Combat tests both use a target's Defence as their TN. Situational modifiers, such

TABLE 9.15: CLOSE COMBAT TESTS

SITUATION	TEST MODIFIERS
Defender Prone	−5 TN
Attacker in advantageous position	−1 to −3 TN†
Defender in advantageous position	+1 to +3 TN†
Defender behind cover	See Armour and Cover Protection Table, page 232
Off-hand penalty	+8 TN††

†: Narrator must determine exact modifier based on his assessment of the situation.

††: The off-hand penalty applies whenever a character relies on his non-dominant hand to perform a close combat action (such as swinging a club or blocking a punch).

TABLE 9.16: RANGED COMBAT TESTS

RANGED COMBAT MODIFIERS

RANGE CATEGORY	TEST MODIFIERS
Point blank range	−2 TN
Short range	±0 TN
Medium range	+2 TN
Long range	+4 TN
Extended range	Another +2 per increment past long range

SITUATION	TEST MODIFIERS
Defender prone	+5 TN
Attacker in advantageous position	−1 to −5 TN†
Defender in advantageous position	+1 to +5 TN†
Defender behind cover	See Armour and Cover Protection Table, page 232
Attacker on horseback	+4 TN

TARGET MOTION

Moving 3 to 6 yards per round (walk)	+2 TN
Moving 7–12 yards per round (jog)	+4 TN
Moving 13–18 yards per round (run)	+6 TN
Moving 19–40 yards per round (sprint)	+9 TN
Moving 41–80 yards per round	+12 TN
Moving 81–160 yards per round	+15 TN
Moving 161+ yards per round	+20 TN or more

Other Modifiers	
Off-hand penalty	+8 TN††

†: Narrator must determine exact modifier based on his assessment of the situation

††: The off-hand penalty applies whenever a character relies on his non-dominant hand to perform a ranged attack.

as those detailed on Table 9.15, may also modify these tests. Physical modifiers (found on Table 9.8) may also apply.

Ranged Combat

> *'Legolas turned and set an arrow to the string, though it was a long shot for his small bow.'*
>
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

The TN for a Ranged Combat attack test depends on the target's Defence, although range also plays an important role. The rules define five range increments: point blank, short, medium, long, and extended. To find the test TN, determine the physical distance from shooter to target and consult Table 8.2 to find whether the distance qualifies as point blank, short, medium, long, or extended range for the weapon being used. Then consult Table 9.16 to determine the TN modifiers for that range interval, and apply these to the target's Defence to find the final TN for the test.

The modifier for attacks at extended range is +2 TN for each listed increment in excess of long range. The absolute maximum range is equal to 5 times the listed long range.

INFLICTING DAMAGE

> *'A shrill cry rang out in the night; and he felt a pain like a dart of poisoned ice pierce his left shoulder.'*
>
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

Successful attacks inflict a certain amount of damage on the defender. The amount of damage varies by weapon or attack type. See the Weapons Table on page 8.2 for particulars.

A character's Strength modifier applies to the damage tests made for armed and unarmed (close combat) attacks. It also applies to ranged attacks involving thrown objects (javelins, daggers, stones), but not to other ranged weapons or ranged combat attacks.

For information on armour, see the Armour Table on page 206.

Extra Successes in Combat

The degree of success a character achieves on an attack can modify the damage he does. If a character achieves an extraordinary success with an attack, the attack inflicts maximum damage. Don't roll for damage. Instead, simply total up the maximum possible roll on any dice (12 on 2d6, for instance) and add in any appropriate damage modifiers for weapons or Strength.

However, sometimes brutally hacking and slashing at an opponent in an effort to inflict as many points of damage as possible isn't the most heroic, dramatic, or effective way to fight. As an optional rule, a character who scores an extraordinary success with an attack may opt for one of the following effects (or any others the Narrator allows) instead of inflicting damage:

- Break or damage your opponent's weapon, shield, or equipment. Enchanted and masterwork items cannot normally be broken in this way. At the Narrator's option, they can, but only if the attacker's test result beats the TN by 21 or more for masterwork items, or 31 or more for enchanted items.

- Break one of your opponent's limbs. See the Crippling Wound trait on page 154 for potential effects.
- Automatically gain initiative over opponent for a period of time: the next two rounds for a superior success, until the end of the fight for an extraordinary success.
- Automatically gain a bonus to hit that opponent (+2 for a superior success, +4 for an extraordinary success) with attacks for the rest of the combat.
- Automatically gain a defensive bonus against that opponent (+2 for a superior success, +4 for an extraordinary success) for the rest of the combat.

- Unhorse opponent (causing 1d6+1 damage unless he makes an Acrobatics or Jump test at TN 15).

For even greater degrees of success—greater than 15, 20, 25, or more above the TN—the Narrator might allow even more powerful effects, such as extra actions or a coup de grace.

Narrators may find these options particularly useful when PCs confront powerful enemies like the Lord of the Nazgûl. Rather than have such foes casually slaughter groups of player characters, she can have them harm or hinder the characters, perhaps as a way of toying with them before moving in for the kill. This leaves the characters alive to make a heroic comeback later in the scene or chapter.

In addition, the Narrator may declare that these rules only apply to the PCs and to important enemies of equal power and stature. If so, the average Orc or Dunlending, for example, doesn't get to use them.

Stun Effects

> *'At Pippin's side Beregond was stunned and overborne, and he fell[.]'*
>
> *— The Return of the King*

Characters can make a blunt armed attack to use a blunt weapon (such as a club) or the blunt parts of a weapon (the flat of a sword or axe, the

Table 9.17: Stun Effects

Degree of Success	Reaction TN	Duration	Effect (Failed/Successful)
1 Complete success	5	3d6x3 rounds	Unconscious/–5 test penalty
2 Superior success	10	2d6+3 minutes	Unconscious/–9 test penalty
3 Extraordinary success	15	1d6x10 minutes	Unconscious/–12 test penalty

pommel of a dagger, and so on) to stun instead of kill a target. This sort of attack does not inflict damage normally. Instead, the victim must make a Stamina test at a TN based on the strength of the attack (see the accompanying table) to minimize the stun effects. A character failing the test suffers the full stun effect and is knocked unconscious for a number of rounds. A character who succeeds at the test shakes off the worst of the effects, but suffers action penalties to physical and academic tests for the duration of the stun effect. If he scores a superior success on his Stamina test, halve the duration. If he scores an extraordinary success, he suffers no stun effect at all.

Armour and Cover

> *'Arrows fell among them. One struck Frodo and sprang back.'*
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

Some characters wear armour to minimize the damage sustained from attacks and other sources of injury. Similarly, a character can hide behind cover, such as a wall or stone pillar, to deflect damage from an attack.

Each time an attack inflicts damage to a character, his armour or cover absorbs a number of points and reduces the amount that gets passed on as injury. Cover can only withstand so much damage—beyond that which it can absorb—before attacks destroy it, leaving the character vulnerable. See the accompanying table for more information.

Of course, an attacker can try to shoot around cover by aiming specifically for the parts of the target's body that remain exposed. You can use the same modifiers for called shots to specific parts of the body, like the head or hand. See the accompanying table for modifiers.

See Chapter Eight for more information on armour.

Table 9.18: Armour and Cover Protection

Armour Type	Damage Absorbed
Leather	2
Scale mail	4
Chainmail, ordinary	5
Chainmail, Dwarf	7
Chainmail, mithril	12
Chainmail, Orc	6, –1 on all Nimbleness tests
Chainmail with plates	+1 to chainmail's value
Shield, Large	5–12 lbs. +5 to parry, –5 to hit with ranged attacks
Shield, Small	4–8 lbs. +3 to parry, –5 to hit with ranged attacks

Cover

Cover Type	Damage Absorbed	Damage Sustainable
Thin wooden door	6	5
Wooden door	8	10
Thin metal door	10	15
Reinforced wooden door	12	20
Reinforced metal door; large rocks	14	25
Worked stone wall	20 or more	60 or more

Shooting Around Cover/Called Shots

Degree of Cover	TN Modifier
100% (nothing exposed)	Impossible to shoot around
80–99% (head, arm exposed)	+12 TN
50–79% (some or all of upper body exposed)	+9 TN
25–49% (all upper body, some lower body exposed)	+6 TN
10–24% (most of body exposed)	+3 TN

UNSEEN ATTACKS

FEAR

'"But their power is in terror, and already some in Bree are in their clutch."'
— Aragorn, The Fellowship of the Ring

Whether it comes from powerful spells or simply the terrifying presence of beings such as the Nazgûl, one of the Enemy's most powerful weapons is fear. The fear his servants inspire in the Free Peoples creates despair, causes weakness and anguish, and leaves those who stand against him unable to act.

Every creature or being capable of inspiring fear (such as Smaug, the Lord of the Nazgûl, or a Balrog) or like emotions has the skill Intimidate (usually with the specialty Fear). Some may also have spells or abilities that provide bonuses to that skill for the purpose of arousing dread. See Chapter Twelve for some examples.

To create fear, the creature or being makes an Intimidate test, which the victim opposes with a Willpower reaction test. Table 9.19 describes the results of this opposed test.

Once a character is subject to a fear effect, it continues to hinder him until the source of the fear leaves the area entirely or is destroyed. However, if sufficient cause arises, the character may make additional Willpower tests to throw off the effects of fear. Examples include seeing a comrade in peril (as when Merry saw Éowyn facing the Lord of the Nazgûl alone), the cause of the fear moving further away, or being subjected to an Inspire test (see page 126) by someone who has not been exposed to or has successfully resisted the fear.

Characters who oppose the Shadow may use these rules to create fear and awe in the servants of the Enemy by making Intimidate (Majesty or Power) tests against them too. See the Intimidate skill, page 127, for more details.

TABLE 9.20: FEAR MODIFIERS

INSPIRING FEAR

MODIFIER TO INTIMIDATE (FEAR)

SITUATION	TEST MODIFIER
Target is in a stronghold of evil or a place of darkness (Mordor, Dol Guldur, Moria, and so on)	+2 to +8
Target is near an evil place	+1 to +3
Target is at a disadvantage (outnumbered, and so on)	+2 to +4
The cause of the fear is nearby	+1 to +6
Attacker utters terrifying soliloquy	+1 to +6
Appropriate display of power/might	+1 to +6
Brandishing an object the target has cause to fear	+1 to +4

RESISTING FEAR

SITUATION	MODIFIER TO WILLPOWER TEST
Target is in a stronghold of the Wise, or a place of goodness (Minas Tirith, Rivendell, Lórien, etc.)	+2 to +8
Target is fighting for or protecting that to which he is Faithful	+2 per pick allotted to that trait
The cause of the fear is at a distance	+1 to +6
Defender utters inspiring soliloquy	+1 to +6

TABLE 9.19: FEAR

DEFENDER'S TEST RESULT	EFFECT
Failure	No effect; victim can resist the fear and act normally.
Marginal success	Frightened: Victim suffers a −1 penalty on all tests.
Complete success	Panicked: Victim suffers a −2 penalty on all tests.
Superior success	Unnerved: Victim may take no actions for one round, and he suffers a −4 penalty on all tests.
Extraordinary success	Unmanned: Victim flees as fast as he can, or he falls to the ground and cowers.

CORRUPTION

'"It is mad not to use it, to use the power of the Enemy against him. The fearless, the ruthless, these alone will achieve victory."'

— Boromir, The Fellowship of the Ring

Whenever a character is exposed to dangerous influences (such as the One Ring) or succumbs to evil temptation (as Saruman did), he may suffer the effects of *Corruption*. Eventually, if no one saves him or he cannot or will not save himself, he becomes totally Corrupt, a servant of Darkness.

If a character is exposed to or does anything the Narrator believes could corrupt him, he must make a Willpower test against a difficulty determined by the Narrator. See the accompanying table for examples. If the character rolls a failure, he acquires 1 point of Corruption. If he rolls a complete failure, he gains 2 points of Corruption. With a disastrous failure, he takes on 3 points of Corruption. If he achieves a marginal or complete success, he acquires no Corruption. With a superior success, he reduces his existing Corruption total by 1. If he manages an extraordinary success, he reduces his existing Corruption total by 2.

Additionally, when the character suffers a complete or disastrous failure, he must take an appropriate action to demonstrate the effects of Corruption upon him. For example, suppose a servant of the Shadow offers Hilgo Boffin a bribe to 'report anything unusual you see to me.' Hilgo suffers a disastrous failure to resist, so he acquires 3 Corruption and must take the money. If he knows anything useful, he reports it at that time.

After a character has a complete or disastrous failure, the Narrator may later allow him to make additional Willpower tests—at the same or greater difficulty—to shake off the corrupting influence. If he succeeds, the character does not lose any of the Corruption points he gained, but he snaps out of it and can stop taking corrupted actions. For example, a few hours after Hilgo agrees to spy, the Narrator might allow him another Willpower test. If he succeeds, he realizes what an awful thing he's done and stops spying. He still doesn't lose the Corruption points, though.

Of course, some characters may not want to resist temptation or corrupting influences. If so, they must act accordingly, and the Narrator assigns them Corruption points automatically —typically a minimum of 2.

Although Corruption is not visible, other characters can often tell there's something wrong. To reflect

TABLE 9.21: CORRUPTION DIFFICULTY

SITUATION	TN
EXPOSURE TO THE ONE RING (CIRCA TA 3018)	
Under normal circumstances	10
Near Mordor	15
In Mordor	20
For every time the Ring is worn	+1 to TN
EXPOSURE TO TEMPTATION	
Mild temptation	5–8
Strong temptation	9–14
Very strong temptation	15–20
SORCERY	
Learning a spell of sorcery	No roll
Character receives 1 Corruption automatically	
Casting a spell of sorcery	15
Character has 1–3 Corruption	+1 TN
Character has 4–6 Corruption	+2 TN
Character has 7–9 Corruption	+3 TN
Character has 10+ Corruption	+4 TN

this, a character with Corruption suffers a test result penalty—equal to his Corruption points—to the use of all social skills. This penalty does not apply to Intimidate.

Every player must keep track of his character's Corruption. If a character's Corruption ever equals or exceeds his Bearing, the character becomes Corrupt. A Corrupt character serves Sauron—either directly or indirectly—or his own evil needs (as Saruman did). He becomes a non-player character, controlled solely by the Narrator.

Characters can decrease their Corruption total by strongly resisting temptation and corrupting influences (see above), through honest repentance and confession, or—in some cases—by performing noble and heroic deeds. If a character with Corruption points does something particularly noteworthy and heroic out of the goodness of his heart (such as saving helpless Hobbits from Orcs, even though he stands nothing to gain), the Narrator may reduce his Corruption by however many points she considers appropriate, typically at least 2.

HORSES

> *'"But you need not fear: my horse will not let any rider fall that I command him to bear."'*
>
> *— Glorfindel,*
>
> *The Fellowship of the Ring*

Horses may play an important part in your characters' adventures in Middle-earth. They—and their enemies—use them to ride into battle, to escape from danger, and to cross through the Wilds as quickly as possible.

TABLE 9.22: HORSE MOVEMENT

ACTION	COST	EFFECT*	TEST
Crawl/Step	1	Move 2 yards	No test
Walk	1	Move 12 yards	No test
Canter	1	Move 48 yards	No test
Run	1	Move 72 yards	Run (TN5+)†
Gallop	Full round	Move 160 yards	Run (TN10+)†
Swim	1	Move 4 yards	Swim (TN5+)
Jump	1	Move 2 yards vertical, 4 yards horizontal	Jump (TN5+)†
Lie Down	1	Become prone	No test
Stand up	1	Stand from prone	Nimbleness (TN5+)†

*: If the horse pulls a chariot, wain, waggon, or the like, reduce its movement by half or more, as appropriate. Depending on the strength of the horses and the weight of the load pulled, a waggon may reduce movement much more severely or prevent it altogether. Swimming and jumping generally are not possible for a horse hitched to a vehicle. A character may be able to attempt a Teamster test to overcome some of these difficulties.

†: Making a horse move more quickly requires a Ride test by the rider—or a Run test by an unridden horse. A test is required only if the character is engaged in combat or attempts to move farther than normally allowed by the action. If the moving character is involved in a combat situation, test TNs normally increase by +5. If the test is failed, the horse stumbles and can only move up to half its maximum intended move. With a disastrous failure, the horse trips and falls prone.

BASIC HORSE RULES

The following page provides detailed game statistics for five types of horses: ponies, standard horses, warhorses, the *mearas*, and Elven-steeds such as Asfaloth. The Horse Movement Table describes how quickly horses move, using the standard movement rules (see page 214).

Generally, horses have low attribute scores, except for Strength and Vitality. Better breeds of horses, or horses trained for combat, have higher than normal Bearings, reflecting their greater ability to withstand fear.

Horses usually only have the following skills: Armed Combat, Jump, Observe, Run, Stealth, Survival, and Swim. Armed Combat represents their ability to kick or bite, though only horses trained for combat are truly skilled at this. Survival represents their ability to thrive in the wild, not any learned ability to hunt or build shelters.

Mearas and Elven-horses both have Ride as a skill, reflecting their ability to keep a poor rider in his seat if necessary. If the rider has fewer ranks in Ride than the horse, substitute the horse's Ride for his when making tests.

HORSES IN COMBAT

Horses can play a large role in combats of all sizes, from a simple joust all the way to up a cavalry charge.

RIDING IN BATTLE

In combat situations, horses with riders do not get separate actions. They are considered an extension of the rider. The rider simply substitutes the horse's movement for his own, making Ride tests as required by the Narrator. In most cases, these tests are considered free actions, but controlling a particularly unruly or fearful horse or making a horse ride into the thick of battle may require the rider to use one action to make the test.

An unridden horse gets an allotment of two actions per round, like other characters. It normally uses them to flee.

ANIMAL ABILITIES

Some animals have abilities all their own. Two of these are common to horses, as shown here.

WAR-TRAINED: Animals with this ability have been taught how to use their bodies, hooves/claws, and teeth in battle without causing problems for their rider. They receive an allotment of one action per round when ridden, which they can use to attack any target designated by their rider.

STEADY: Because battle is loud, full of horrible smells, and generally terri-

fying, all Ride tests made in battle suffer a –1 to –4 test result penalty. Animals with the Steady ability are trained for combat and do not spook so easily, so the penalty does not apply to their riders.

Fighting from Horseback

Characters fighting from horseback sometimes experience problems. Generally, no penalties apply to Armed Combat. In fact, with the proper use of Charge manoeuvres and the like, fighting from horseback can create a distinctive advantage. A rider on horseback may be considered 'significantly taller' than some opponents on foot: Hobbits, Dwarves, short Men, and so on. If so, apply the appropriate combat modifiers (see page 219).

Using Ranged Combat from horseback is a different story. Characters typically suffer a –4 test result penalty when trying to shoot or throw missiles from horseback.

Typical Horses

Pony

Attributes: Bearing 1 (–3), Nimbleness 5 (±0), Perception 4 (±0), Strength 12 (+3), Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 1 (–3)

Reactions: Stamina +3, Swiftness ±0, Willpower –3, Wisdom ±0

Health: 11

Skills: Armed Combat +1, Jump +5, Observe +3, Run +8, Survival +3

Special Abilities: Natural Weapons (Bite 1/2d6, Kick 2d6)

Description: Ponies are small horses, suitable for riding by Hobbits, Dwarves, and ladies, but not by larger folk. Adventurers often use them to carry baggage and gear, though their skittishness makes it difficult to get them to enter dangerous areas.

Horse

Attributes: Bearing 2 (–2), Nimbleness 6 (±0), Perception 5 (±0), Strength 13 (+3), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 1 (–3)

Reactions: Stamina +3, Swiftness ±0, Willpower –2, Wisdom ±0

Health: 13

Skills: Armed Combat +3, Jump +7, Observe +4, Run +9, Survival +4

Special Abilities: Natural Weapons (Bite 1d6, Kick 2d6)

Description: This template represents the typical horse. Used throughout Middle-earth for riding, carrying burdens, and many other tasks, they come in many different colours, sizes, and temperaments.

Warhorse

Attributes: Bearing 5 (±0), Nimbleness 7 (±0), Perception 6 (±0), Strength 15 (+4), Vitality 12 (+3), Wits 3 (–1)

Reactions: Stamina +4, Swiftness +1, Willpower ±0, Wisdom ±0

Health: 16

Skills: Armed Combat +6, Jump +9, Observe +5, Run +11, Stealth +2, Survival +4, Swim +1

Special Abilities: Natural Weapons (Bite 1d6, Kick 2d6), Steady, War-trained

Description: Knights and other horsemen who must ride their steeds into battle prefer to have a warhorse if possible. Larger, stronger, and tougher than an ordinary horse, a warhorse has been trained for battle and can withstand the noise and smells without breaking. Warhorses often wear barding (horse armor).

Mearas

Attributes: Bearing 6 (±0), Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 7 (±0), Strength 16 (+5), Vitality 13 (+3), Wits 5 (±0)

Reactions: Stamina +5, Swiftness +2, Willpower +2, Wisdom +1

Health: 18

Skills: Armed Combat +7, Jump +11, Observe +6, Ride +4, Run +12, Stealth +4, Survival +5, Swim +3

Special Abilities: Natural Weapons (Bite 1d6, Kick 2d6), Steady, War-trained

Description: Descended from Felaróf, Eorl's horse, the *mearas* are the mightiest and swiftest horses of Rohan, and thus of all the world—save Elven-horses. Except in rare circumstances, they allow only the King of the Mark and his sons to ride them. Most are white or grey.

Elven-steed

Attributes: Bearing 8 (+1), Nimbleness 10 (+2), Perception 9 (+1), Strength 16 (+5), Vitality 14 (+4), Wits 8 (+1)

Reactions: Stamina +5, Swiftness +4, Willpower +3, Wisdom +3

Health: 19

Skills: Armed Combat +9, Jump +13, Language: Quenya (or Grey Elvish) +3, Observe +9, Ride +8, Run +15, Stealth +6, Survival +7, Swim +5

Special Abilities: Natural Weapons (Bite 1d6, Kick 2d6), Steady, War-trained

Description: These horses, bred and raised by the Elves, have speed, intelligence, strength, and power unheard of in other horses. To many folk, they seem magical. They can, in fact, understand their masters' commands in Elvish. They bear no riders save their masters and those their masters tell them to carry.

BATTLES

'No few had fallen, renowned or nameless, captain or soldier; for it was a great battle and the full count of it no tale has told.'

— The Return of the King

Large, deadly battles—such as the ones fought at the Pelennor Fields and Dale in the War of the Ring—occur during tumultuous times in Middle-earth. Heroes often find themselves in the thick of combat—fighting for their very lives against Orcs and Trolls—or behind the walls of a fortress or city, defending it against besiegers. The rules in this section detail how to recreate the effects of epic battles in your chronicle.

BASIC RULES

Battles are fought in *rounds*, just like smaller combats, but in this case each round is one hour long instead of six seconds. Otherwise it would take far too long to resolve the outcome of the battle.

To begin a battle, the Narrator determines the relative strength of the opponents using the Battle Resolution Table. If the two sides are roughly equal, they start at 'Even.' If the characters' side has the greater strength—due to numerical superiority, better position, better arms, more valiant captains, or other reasons—the Narrator starts the battle one or more steps towards Victory, on the 'Winning' end of the table. If the characters' side is weaker, the battle starts closer to Defeat, on the 'Losing' end of the table.

Each round of battle, the Narrator rolls 2d6 for each side. She modifies the roll for the characters' side as indicated on Table 9.23. For example, if their side is at Winning (+1), she adds +1 to their roll. She may also, if she wishes, add each side's Siegecraft ranks, typically from each side's captain. If the characters' side has the higher roll, advance the battle one step up the chart, toward Victory. If it has the lower roll, the battle takes one step down the chart , toward Defeat. If the rolls tie, nothing happens.

If the battle reaches Victory, the characters' side wins. Perhaps they slay all their foes or drive them from the field or force them to surrender. On the other hand, if the battle reaches Defeat, the characters' side loses. While the characters themselves probably survive, their friends and comrades may be slaughtered, or they and the other characters may have to retreat. The Narrator interprets the results and determines exactly what happens in any given battle.

TABLE 9.23: BATTLE RESOLUTION

VICTORY
Winning (+3)
Winning (+2)
Winning (+1)
Even (±0)
Losing (−1)
Losing (−2)
Losing (−3)
Defeat

HEROES IN BATTLE

When using the rules above, the Narrator can simply assume all PCs survive—regardless of the outcome of the battle—and contribute to the best efforts of their side. However, sometimes players desire greater glory and involvement for their characters—though this entails some risk (and takes more game time). If you'd like to learn more about what happens to individual characters in battle, do the following:

For each round of battle, first determine where the character spent most of the time fighting: on the Outskirts, in the Thick of Battle, or in the very Heart of Battle. The Narrator can allow each character to choose, or she can roll 2d6 and consult the Press Table.

TABLE 9.24: PRESS

Roll (2d6)	Where Character Fights
2–4	Outskirts
5–8	Thick of Battle
9–12	Heart of Battle

Second, have the characters each roll 2d6. Add +1 if he's in the Thick of Battle, or add +2 if he's in the Heart of Battle. Compare the final result to the Hero Combat Table.

UNIT COMBAT

'But through them there came striding up, roaring like beasts, a great company of hill-trolls out of Gorgoroth.'
— The Return of the King

Rather than focusing on the deeds of individual heroes and their foes, you may prefer to let player characters and important NPCs lead units of soldiers and resolve the battle on a larger, quicker scale: *unit combat.*

This system works well in both the abstract and the concrete. In the abstract, you can simply tell the characters what kind of enemy units they're facing each round and then resolve any attacks.

In the concrete, you can actually draw out a map of the battlefield, then designate a counter of some sort for each unit. The advantage to this method is that the players can get a decent feel for the strategic shape of the battle. Even using this method, you should only bother rolling the dice to resolve combats the characters are either directly in or are close enough to that such a possibility might occur within a few rounds. Otherwise, the flow of the battle should go as you or the relative statistics of the various units would dictate.

In any case, the scale of the map of the battle should be pretty small. Elven cavalry can actually travel up to 4,800 yards per hour-long round. Most other units move more slowly, but you should be prepared to give them enough room to move for at least a few rounds on the map.

TABLE 9.25: HERO COMBAT

ROLL (2D6)	RESULT
2–3	NORMAL BATTLE: Nothing noteworthy happens. The character suffers 1d6 x 1/2d6 points of injury. He may subtract his armour's Protection from this.
4–6	FURIOUS BATTLE: Nothing noteworthy happens. The character suffers 1d6 x 1d6 points of injury He may subtract his armour's Protection from this.
7–10	DEADLY COMBAT: The character meets up with a powerful foe—such as an Orc-chieftain or captain of the Haradrim—and must engage him in single combat. Resolve the combat normally. If you desire a faster resolution of the encounter, have each combatant roll 2d6 and add his full Courage to the result. The highest total wins the duel but suffers 1d6 x 1/2d6 points of injury. He may subtract his armour's Protection from this.
11–12	VALOUROUS DEED: The character has the chance to accomplish something bold, noteworthy, or heroic. Examples include breaking a strong enemy line, capturing an enemy banner, rescuing a beleaguered ally, or single-handedly slaying a *mûmak*. This may or may not involve a combat. The Narrator determines exactly what each Valourous Deed entails. Characters typically should not have more than one or two opportunities to perform Valourous Deeds during a single day's battle.

The Unit Template

Every unit has the following five attributes: Size, Strength, Toughness, Mobility, and Morale.

Unit Size

To determine a unit's Size, divide the number of persons in the unit by 10. If appropriate, apply a racial multiplier from the Unit Attributes Table, then round normally. A mixed unit containing warriors from many different races usually requires no multiplier, but a unit consisting solely of members of one race always does.

Strength

This attribute rates the unit's power—its capacity to inflict injury, its general level of skill and ability, the quality of its armaments, and other factors. Thus, a troop of Elven archers, though it carries fewer weapons than a squad of Orc-warriors—and probably has fewer members as well—has greater Strength due to Elves' inherent abilities and might.

Strength ranges from 1–12, sometimes higher. The Unit Attributes Table provides suggested average Strength ratings for units by race, but the Narrator makes the final determination regarding a unit's Strength.

To attack another unit, a unit makes a standard attack roll, using the unit leader's Siegecraft (or Bearing, if he doesn't have Sigecraft), against a TN equal to 10 plus the opposing unit's Toughness. Compare the unit's Strength to the Attribute Modifier Table on page 48 to determine the modifier that applies to the roll. If the unit succeeds, it inflicts a number of points of damage on the opposing unit equal to: (attacker's Strength + Size) – (defender's Toughness + Size).

Damage reduces a unit's Size. When a unit's Size reaches 0, the unit has been totally destroyed.

Most units only carry melee weapons and thus can only attack units they are in direct contact with. Units armed with ranged weapons, such as bows or javelins, can attack other units within range of their weapons.

Toughness

Every unit has a Toughness that represents how hard it is to damage. This reflects the armour worn by the soldiers in the unit, the soldiers' ability to defend themselves from their attackers, and their resistance to pain and injury. Like Strength, Toughness is rated from 1–12, sometimes higher.

Mobility

In battle, a unit that can move and react more quickly than its opponent has an important advantage. The Mobility attribute represents a unit's speed and agility. Since each round of battle is an hour long, Mobility does not indicate how many feet a unit may move per round. Instead, a Mobility rating, from 1–12 (sometimes higher), indicates *relative* swiftness and manoeuvrability. A unit with Mobility 10 can get to a location faster than one with Mobility 6, which is all the Narrator generally needs to know. If you actually have a map on which you wish to plot out movement, multiply Mobility by 200 yards to determine how far the unit can move in one round.

Mobility indicates a unit's ability to move on foot. A unit on horseback has double its normal Mobility.

Morale

Perhaps the most important attribute of any unit is its Morale: its sense of purpose, willingness to fight, bravery, group strength of will, and so forth. A unit with good Morale can remain cohesive and keep fighting even against the worst odds, while one

Table 9.26: Unit Attributes

Race	Size Multiplier	Average Strength	Average Toughness	Average Mobility	Average Morale
Dwarf	x1	7	8	6	8 + Size
Elf	x1	8	6	12	10 + Size
Hobbit	x.75	3	4	4	5 + Size
Man, Dúnadan	x1.25	7	6	9	8 + Size
Man, other	x1	5	5	7	6 + Size
Olog	x2.5	8	10	9	8 + Size
Orc	x1	5	5	7	6 + Size
Troll	x2	6	9	8	7 + Size
Uruk	x1.5	6	8	8	7 + Size

with poor Morale quickly breaks and runs the moment the battle turns against it.

A unit's Morale equals 1–12, sometimes higher, *plus* its Size. Thus, a unit becomes more likely to break as it suffers casualties. Units use Morale defensively, to keep from breaking. Whenever an enemy deliberately tries to cause a unit to flee or surrender—typically through Intimidate or other fear effects—the unit's Morale acts as the TN for the test. If the test exceeds the unit's Morale, the unit breaks. The Narrator determines how the affected unit reacts. At the Narrator's option, a character with a powerful unit at his back who tries to Intimidate another unit may apply his unit's Size divided by 5 as a bonus to his Intimidate test.

Similarly, when the fortunes of war make a unit likely to break, the Narrator makes a test against the unit's Morale, rolling 2d6 and adding whatever modifiers seem appropriate. Think of the circumstances as having an inherent Intimidate rank, and apply it as if making a skill test. Again, if the result exceeds the unit's Morale, the unit breaks.

At the Narrator's option, a unit may use its base Morale (1–12, without Size modifiers) to determine a modifier from the Attribute Modifier Table (page 48) and add that to Strength + Size when attacking another unit, for purposes of figuring damage. Conversely, the defending unit can then use its base Morale to determine a modifier to add to its Toughness + Size too.

If the unit's captain—or another prominent member of the unit—has the Inspire skill, he may use it to hold the unit together. He makes an Inspire test as an opposed test against the roll made to try to break the unit. If he succeeds, his unit does not break. Of course, this leader must have some way to communicate his inspirational message to his comrades, such as a loud voice, a horn-cry, a banner, or mounting a valiant defence within sight of the rest of the unit.

SAMPLE UNITS

Here are five sample units for use in your games.

DWARVEN WARRIORS

Armed with axes and mattocks and garbed in sturdy chainmail, these small and doughty warriors are a match for any force the Enemy can hurl at them.

Size: 10 Strength: 8 Toughness: 9
Mobility: 6 Morale: 18

ELVEN ARCHERS

This troop of Wood-elves from Thranduil's realm may seem small and weak, but their Elven power—combined with their deadly skill with the bow—makes them a foe to be reckoned with. They carry short bows and long knives and wear no armour.

Size: 4 Strength: 8 (can attack at range) Toughness: 6
Mobility: 10 Morale: 14

ROHIRIC CAVALRY

Astride their noble steeds, these warriors of the North strike fear into the hearts of their foes. They wear hauberks of chainmail and carry long spears and longswords. Some of the Rohirrim also carry bows.

Size: 15 Strength: 7 Toughness: 7
Mobility: 8 (doubled on horseback = 16) Morale: 21

ORC-WARRIORS

This horde of Orcs, carrying arms and armour from the foundries of the Dark Lord, gladly slays any who oppose it.

Size: 25 Strength: 5 Toughness: 5
Mobility: 7 Morale: 31

SOUTHRON FOOTMEN

Armed with scimitars and wearing mail of overlapping brazen plates, these swarthy warriors of the South fight with a fierce temper and bitter skill.

Size: 8 Strength: 5 Toughness: 5
Mobility: 7 Morale: 14

SIEGES

'Arrows thick as rain came whistling
over the battlements...
Some found a mark. The assault on
Helm's Deep had begun[.]'
— The Two Towers

In many battles, one side tries to take a city, tower, or fortification, while another does its best to defend it. This constitutes a *siege*. The battle of Helm's Deep and the assault on Minas Tirith both qualify as sieges.

Conducting a siege properly requires the use of the Siegecraft skill (page 134). Anyone can, in theory, besiege a place of defence, but a skilled captain has a far better chance of success. Similarly, a defender who understands how sieges work is better able to protect his citadel from them.

STRATEGIC DEFENCE

Every stronghold has two attributes: Protection and Structure. Protection represents its 'armour': how much damage its walls, gates, and

TABLE 9.27: PROTECTION AND STRUCTURE

GENERAL FORTIFICATIONS

FORTIFICATION	PROTECTION	STRUCTURE
DOOR		
Door, wooden, weak	1	1
Door, wooden, average	2	3
Door, wooden, strong	4	4
Door, metal, weak	1	2
Door, metal, average	3	4
Door, metal, strong	5	6
Door, stone, weak	1	2
Door, stone, average	3	5
Door, stone, strong	5	7
GATE OR BRIDGE		
Weak	1	1–2
Average	2–3	3–5
Strong	4–5	4–7
Very Strong	6–8	6–9
TOWER		
Weak	3	10–60
Average	4–6	50–100
Strong	5–8	75–125
Very Strong	8–10	100–150
WALL*		
Weak	1–2	2–6
Average	3–6	5–10
Strong	6–8	8–15
Very Strong	8–10	10–20

TABLE 9.30: SIEGE ENGINES

ENGINE	DAMAGE[1]	RANGE (YARDS)	CREW	SHOTS
Battering ram, small[2]	1d6+3/1/2d6	None	6	1 per 2 rounds
Battering ram, large[2]	2d6/1d6–1	None	12	1 per 3 rounds
Blasting fire[3]	2d6	5/10/20/50	4	1 per 5 minutes
Catapult, small	1d6+3	15/60/150/250	3	1 per 5 minutes
Catapult, large	3d6	20/80/200/400	4	1 per 10 minutes

[1] 'Damage' represents the damage done to fortifications. Any successful hit by a siege engine on an individual person automatically slays that person—except for blasting fire (see 'Fire,' page 245). A superior success on the Siegecraft test causes +1 damage. An extraordinary success causes +2.

[2] For battering rams, apply the damage before the slash to gates, and the number after to walls and like structures. However, the Siegecraft skill is not required to use a battering ram.

[3] Blasting fire is a device of the Enemy—a product of sorcery—and is not used by the Wise or those allied with them.

Note: A crew smaller than that listed can use a siege engine. However, for every person less than a full crew, impose a –2 penalty on all Siegecraft tests. For example, a crew of two fires a large catapult at –4.

TABLE 9.28: PROTECTION AND STRUCTURE II

SPECIFIC FORTIFICATIONS

FORTIFICATION	PROTECTION	STRUCTURE
GATE		
Great Gates of the Hornburg	7	6
Helm's Gate of the Hornburg	6	5
Minas Tirith gate	8	9
Morannon gate	7	8
Rear-gate of the Hornburg	5	5
TOWER		
Barad-dûr	10	350
Carchost, Narchost	6	90
Hornburg	6	110
Meduseld	4	80
Orthanc	14	200
Tower of Cirith Ungol	7	130
White Tower of Ecthelion	6	80
WALL		
Cirith Ungol outer wall	6	9
Deeping Wall	7	12
Hornburg outer wall	7	10
Hornburg inner wall	7	8
Minas Tirith outer wall	14	20
Minas Tirith circle walls	8	9
Morannon	9	14
Rammas Echor	7	7
Ring of Isengard	10	20

*: Damage to a wall that exceeds its Structure does not normally collapse the entire wall. Instead, it creates a hole 1d6 yards in diameter.

TABLE 9.29: LOCKPICKING

LOCK TYPE	LOCKPICKING TN*	PROTECTION BONUS
Latch	10	+1
Lock, poor	10	+1
Lock, average	15	+2
Lock, good	20	+2
Lock, amazing	25	+3
Bar, thin	—	+1
Bar, thick	—	+3

* You must have the Lockpicking ability to attempt this. If so, use your Nimbleness or Legerdemain for the test, whichever you prefer.

towers can absorb without harm. Structure represents its 'Health': how much damage it can withstand, beyond its Protection, before it collapses or is destroyed. Tables 9.27 and 9.28 provide average Protection and Structure ratings for various fortifications.

LOCKS

Many doors and gates bear locks or bars that make them harder to get through unless you have a key. Some typical locks are shown on Table 9.29, along with the TN to pick them (assuming you have the Rogue order ability Lockpicking) and the added Protection the lock offers the door. The protection bonuses for locks and bars are cumulative, to a maximum of +6.

SIEGE ENGINES

When attacking a fortress, a besieger typically uses *siege engines*: enormous, destructive engines of war that can batter down walls and towers. Employing them requires a sufficient crew, at least one member of which must have the Siegecraft skill (page 134). See Table 9.30 for information on various types of engines used in Middle-earth.

STONECRAFT

Characters who possess knowledge of how to work stone and build fortifications can aid in the defence of a siege—or help besiegers batter down walls and towers more quickly.

A character with sufficient time—days or weeks, sometimes even months—can strengthen a fortification to protect it from a siege. The Narrator assigns a difficulty to the task based on the existing nature and strength of the stronghold, the availability of materials and workers, and like factors. The skill description on page 136 provides some guidelines. If the character succeeds with a

Stonecraft (Fortification) test, he increases the Protection or Structure of the fortification (his choice) by +1. A superior success increases it by +2. An extraordinary success adds +3.

Improvements to fortifications are usually permanent if the character had time to make them so. If pressed for time—such as when hurrying to strengthen a wall before the hosts of the Enemy arrive—characters often make quick, easy improvements that last only for a single battle. Once a character permanently improves a fortification or structure, he cannot do so again to the same fortification or structure until he gains at least 1 rank in Stonecraft.

On the other hand, a character's Stonecraft can help besiegers destroy a citadel more swiftly. The character makes a Stonecraft (Fortification) test. See the skill description on page 136 for suggested TNs. If he succeeds, his Stonecraft provides a +1 affinity bonus to his (or his commander's) Siegecraft. He gains a +2 bonus for a superior success, and a +3 bonus for an extraordinary success.

INJURY, WEARINESS, AND HEALING

Whenever a character sustains damage, he may be injured or killed depending on the total amount of damage he has accumulated. As characters suffer damage from attacks or other sources of injury, they progress from healthy to injured, then incapacitated to near death. Similarly, as characters act, they become tired, eventually suffering penalties due to Weariness. The following sections describe how injuries and Weariness accumulate, how they affect characters, and how characters recover from them through healing and rest.

TABLE 9.31: EFFECTS OF INJURY

WOUND LEVEL	INJURY EFFECTS*
Healthy	None
Dazed	Character performs tests at −1
Injured	Character performs tests at −3
Wounded	Character performs tests at −5
Incapacitated	Character performs tests at −7
Near Death	Character performs tests at −9

*: Injury penalties apply to all physical and combat-related tests, as well as to most academic tests. See the Physical and Academic Test Modifiers Tables (pages 218 and 220). They do not apply to Stamina reaction tests made to recover from injury. The severity of injury already factors into the TN of these reaction tests.

HEALTH AND WOUND LEVELS

> *'Sam's wound was not deep, but it looked ugly, and Aragorn's face was grave as he examined it. After a moment he looked up with relief.'*
>
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

Every character has a Health rating equal to his Vitality attribute plus his Strength modifier. This number represents the amount of damage the character can sustain within each Wound Level.

As characters suffer damage, they progress through a number of Wound Levels describing their overall degree of injury. Starting with Healthy, the Wound Levels include Dazed, Injured, Wounded, Incapacitated, and Near Death. Dropping below Near Death indicates a character has died from his sustained injuries. Since Hobbits only have four Wound Levels instead of the standard five, they progress straight from Incapacitated to death.

EXAMPLE: *A character with Vitality 9 and Strength modifier ±0 has a Health of 9. If he suffers 9 points of damage, he drops from Healthy to Dazed. Another9 points reduces him to Injured, and so on.*

Once a character has accumulated damage within a Wound Level equal to his Health, he begins accumulating damage in the next Wound Level and suffers action penalties as a result. Injuries impair a character's ability to act, and this is reflected in action penalties that increase as his condition become worse. See the accompanying table for injury effects. This process continues until either the damage ceases to accumulate and the character begins to heal, or the character dies from his wounds, whichever comes first.

TABLE 9.32: DROWNING DAMAGE

EXPOSURE TIME	STAMINA TN	DAMAGE*
1st round	5	1d6
2nd round	10	1d6+3
3rd round	15	2d6+6
4th round	20	3d6+12
5th round	25	4d6+18
6th round	30	5d6+24

*: Once a character has fallen unconscious.

TABLE 9.33: FALLING DAMAGE

DISTANCE	ACROBATICS	
FALLEN	DAMAGE	SWIFTNESS TN
0–2 yards	1d6–3	0
2+ to 5 yards	1d6	5
5+ to 10 yards	2d6+3	10
10+ to 15 yards	3d6+6	15
15+ to 20 yards	4d6+12	20
20+ to 25 yards	5d6+18	25
25+ to 30 yards	6d6+24	30
30+ to 33.3 yards	7d6+30	30
33.3+ yards	7d6+33	30

OTHER SOURCES OF DAMAGE

Aside from combat, characters can suffer damage and injury from a variety of sources, such as fire, falling, or poison. The following sections describe the methods for handling these types of hazards during play, including rules for reducing or avoiding damage from these sources.

DROWNING

When immersed in water for long periods of time—or otherwise unable to breathe—characters suffer damage. A character can hold his breath to delay the onset of drowning for a number of minutes equal to 1, plus his Stamina modifier (minimum of 1). Every round thereafter, the character must make a successful Stamina test or fall unconscious from lack of air. Once unconscious the character sustains automatic damage each round he remains unable to breathe. See Table 9.32 for details.

Assuming a character does not drown to death, the character recovers drowning damage at a rate of 1d6 wound points per quarter hour.

Smoke inhalation can be handled in the same manner as drowning, except that the Narrator might also include toxin effects if she deems the smoke to be poisonous in nature, as is the case with some fumes created by the Dark Lord. See 'Poisons,' below, for more information. Simple suffocation works the same way as drowning too.

FALLING

When a character stumbles or falls, even a short distance, he may suffer injury. The amount of damage sustained depends on the distance he falls. See Table 9.33.

FIRE

When a character comes into contact with extreme heat or open flame, he suffers fire damage for each round of exposure. See Table 9.34.

If exposed to fire, a character must make a Swiftness test to avoid catching on fire himself. The TN depends on the size of the fire, as shown on the accompanying table.

If a character catches on fire, he does not immediately take additional damage from the fire. He can try to put out the fire on his turn by making a Swiftness test with a TN equal to that he originally failed. This is a full-round action. If he succeeds, he takes no further damage. Otherwise, he suffers 2d6+4 points of damage every round he remains on fire.

Others can help the burning character snuff out the flames. Treat this as a combined test. However, those who come into contact with the burn-

TABLE 9.34: FIRE DAMAGE

FIRE/HEAT	DAMAGE/ROUND	SWIFTNESS TN
Torch	1d6+3	5
Campfire	2d6+4	10
Bonfire	3d6+6	15
Blasting Fire	6d6+18	20

ing hero also risk catching on fire themselves. The TN for the Swiftness test to avoid catching fire in such a situation is equal to that the burning character faces, but the helper gets a +5 bonus to his roll.

POISONS

> *'"She's got more than one poison. When she's hunting she just gives 'em a dab in the neck and they go as limp as boned fish..."'*
>
> *— Shagrat, The Two Towers*

During their adventures, characters may be exposed to any number of deadly substances, from the venom of Shelob and her brood, to the poisons Orcs smear on the blades of their swords. The effects, onset time, and lethality of poisons can vary greatly. Use Table 9.35 to construct any type of poison you need. Poisons are expressed in the following terms:

TYPE: This refers to the poison's method of delivery—inhaled, contact, injury, or ingested.

ONSET TIME: This is the period of time between exposure to the poison and the onset of effects. Once this time passes, the victim makes a TN 7 Stamina reaction test to resist the poison's effects.

POTENCY: This is a measure of the poison's toxicity. It modifies the Stamina reaction test to resist the poison's effects.

TREATMENT: This is the TN modifier applied to any Healing skill tests made to neutralize the poison. If the nature of the poison is unknown, have a character first make a modified Healing skill test to identify the poison (Narrator sets TN). If this is successful, the poison can then be treated with a second test (made at a base TN of 10). If treatment succeeds, the poison is entirely neutralized, and it no longer affects the patient. Particularly nasty poisons cannot be treated at all.

EFFECT: This is the poison's primary effect. Apply this as soon as the victim fails a Stamina test to resist the poison. If the victim succeeds at the Stamina test, he suffers the secondary effects instead. Attribute reductions, such as Vitality loss, are temporary. Characters recover from this damage as described under 'Healing.'

SECONDARY EFFECT: This is the effect that the victim suffers if he succeeds at the Stamina test to resist the poison.

STAGES: Some poisons can affect a target over a longer period of time. This tells you the number of onset periods that the poison can affect its victim. With the passage of each onset period, apply the appropriate effect to the victim, depending on whether he made his initial Stamina test or not. Do not have him make another Stamina test each time. The result of

SAMPLE POISONS

Here are two sample poisons.

ORC BLADE-POISON

Many Orcs smear this foul poison on their blades, helping make even the slightest scratch from their weapons that much more dangerous. Type: Injury; Onset: 1 minute; Potency: ±0; Treatment: −5; Effect: 2d6+2 damage; Secondary Effect: 1d6+1 damage; Stages: 1.

DEADLY SERPENT'S BITE

The bite of a viper can be lethal to even the heartiest warrior. Type: Injury; Onset: 1 round; Potency: −10; Treatment: −10; Effect: 1 full Wound Level; Secondary Effect: 1/2 full Wound Level; Stages: 6.

TABLE 9.35: POISONS

TYPE

SELECT ONE:

- Inhaled
- Contact
- Injury
- Ingested

ONSET TIME

SELECT ONE:

- Immediately (as soon as introduced into system)
- 1 round (6 seconds)
- 1 minute
- 20 minutes
- 1 hour
- 6 hours
- 1 day

POTENCY

SELECT ONE:

- ±0, +5, +10, +15, +20 TN modifier.

TREATMENT

SELECT ONE:

- ±0, +5, +10, +15, +20 TN modifier, or none.

EFFECT/SECONDARY EFFECT

SELECT ONE:

- Reduce Vitality (or other attribute) by 1/no effect
- Reduce Vitality (or other attribute) by 1d6/no effect or half Vitality loss
- Damage (1d6 or more, one full Wound Level or more, or the like)/no effect or half damage
- Paralysis (cannot move for 1d6 minutes or longer)/no effect or half duration

STAGES

SELECT ONE:

- 1, 1/2d6, 1d6, 2d6, continuous while in area (appropriate for inhaled poisons only) the first test applies to all subsequent onset periods for a single exposure to a poison. Characters remaining in the area of effect of an inhaled poison continue to suffer effects until they leave.

HEALING

> *' "Here is a grievous hurt and a heavy blow. The arm that was broken has been tended with due skill, and it will mend in time..." '*
>
> *— Aragorn, The Return of the King*

With time and sometimes a healer's skill, injuries heal. The game rules reflect the body's ability to heal through two distinct sets of rules: natural healing and leechcraft.

NATURAL HEALING

Injuries heal naturally over time, although leechcraft can speed the natural healing process dramatically. Without the benefit of the healing arts, characters must rely on their natural vigour and fortitude to restore them to health.

Natural healing requires rest, food, and—if possible—a clean and comfortable environment. Assuming a character sleeps at least six hours per day, eats well, and keeps open wounds clean, he recovers 1 Health point per day. In these conditions, characters also make Stamina tests (see Table 9.36) at the end of every week to recover a number of additional Health points equal to their Vitality modifier. If a character receives the attentions of a healer, he makes Stamina tests twice per week to recover a number of additional Health points equal to his Vitality modifier (minimum of 1). Failure on these Stamina tests incurs no ill consequences. The character just doesn't show remarkable progress in his healing.

If the Narrator determines the character has not taken the proper precautions during a particular day, she may suspend the recovery of Health points for the day. She may also deny the weekly Stamina test on the same grounds.

Recovering from Attribute Reductions

Some hazards, such as poison or sorcery, temporarily reduce attributes. Although leechcraft may help in these matters, generally characters recover lost attribute points naturally at a rate of 1 point per day, unless another rate is specified. Recovering lost attribute points depends on the same conditions—rest, food, cleanliness—as healing normal injuries, but characters cannot ordinarily make Stamina tests to hasten attribute recovery.

TABLE 9.36: NATURAL HEALING

SUBJECT'S WOUND LEVEL	STAMINA TN
Dazed	10
Injured	15
Wounded	20
Incapacitated	25
Near Death	30

TABLE 9.37: HEALING TESTS

SUBJECT'S WOUND LEVEL	HEALING TN
Dazed	10
Injured	15
Wounded	20
Incapacitated	25
Near Death	30

Recovering from Stun Effects

Stun effects wear off naturally without the need for medical attention of any kind. Once the duration of a stun effect expires, the character regains consciousness (if unconscious) and returns to full functionality. Test result penalties for being stunned cease to affect the character at that point.

LEECHCRAFT

The attention of those trained in the arts of healing allows characters to recover from wounds and sickness far more swiftly than they can on their own.

First, a skilled character can make a Healing test to keep an injured person's wounds from worsening, or to save him from bleeding to death. The TN for the test depends on the subject's degree of injury. An Incapacitated character proves much harder to treat than one who is only Dazed, for instance. See Table 9.37 for details.

With a successful Healing test, the character immediately recovers all damage sustained in his current Wound Level, plus one, effectively reducing his degree of injury by one level—although he's but one Health point away from sinking to his former state. For example, if a character with Health 7 sustained 18 points of accumulated damage, giving him 4 points of damage in the Injured level, a successful First Aid test would alleviate the 4 points of damage in his Injured Wound Level, plus 1. This leaves the character almost fully Dazed, a mere one wound point shy of falling back to Injured status.

Once the character has been stabilized through leechcraft, he can make Stamina tests to recover additional Health points twice per week as described above. If the Narrator thinks a character's wounds could become infected, the healer can make another successful Healing test to determine whether the character heals naturally on a given day, or during a given week, or does not recover due to infection.

Advanced Treatment

Whereas characters can make Healing tests 'in the field' to stabilize a character and hasten the process of healing naturally, some injuries and maladies, such as the Black Breath, require greater leechcraft and better care to heal properly.

Characters can only receive this level of care in special places, such as the Houses of Healing in Minas Tirith, Elrond's home in Rivendell, or Lórien. When a character receives treatment there, the character making the Healing test gains a +5 test result bonus.

When the healer succeeds with a Healing test in such a facility, a person under his care immediately recovers a number of wound points equal to his Health, effectively reducing his degree of injury by one Wound Level. Thereafter, he heals naturally and gains the benefit of two Stamina tests per week. Moreover, if the healer keeps the patient under his direct supervision, he may administer care on a daily basis. Under these circumstances, he can perform one Healing test each day to double the normal rate of natural healing. Each successful test enables the patient to recover two wound points that day.

WEARINESS

' "Have hope!" said Boromir.
"I am weary, but I still have some
strength left, and Aragorn too.
We will bear the little folk." '
— The Fellowship of the Ring

Even the strongest and boldest of heroes cannot fight on forever or journey day and night without rest. After a time, Weariness overtakes even the sternest Dwarf or doughtiest Man. As noted in Chapter Three, every character has six Weariness Levels: Hale (fully rested), Winded, Tired, Weary, Spent, and Exhausted.

LOSING WEARINESS LEVELS

A character who exerts himself too much or for too long risks Weariness. You must make Stamina tests to resist Weariness depending on the type of action in which the character is engaged. See the accompanying Weariness Rates Table for details.

TABLE 9.39: WEARINESS LEVELS

LEVEL	EFFECT	REST NEEDED
Hale (normal)	None	
Winded	−1 to all tests	10 minutes
Tired	−2 to all tests	1 hour
Weary	−4 to all tests	2 hours
Spent	−8 to all tests	4 hours
Exhausted	Character collapses and can take no actions until he regains at least one Weariness Level.	

TABLE 9.38: WEARINESS RATES

LEVEL	BASE TIME	INTERVAL
Extreme	10 minutes	5 minutes
Demanding	1 hour	30 minutes
Standard	2 hours	1 hour
Relaxed	4 hours	2 hours

TABLE 9.40: ENCUMBRANCE & WEARINESS

Light burden (Str x less than 1 lb.)	±0
Average burden (Str x 1–10 lbs.)	±0
Heavy burden (Str x 11–20 lbs.)	Stamina test to resist Weariness made at +10 TN
Very heavy burden (Str x 21–30 lbs.)	Stamina test to resist Weariness made at +20 TN

LEVEL: This refers to the level of activity in which the character is engaged. Chatting in a pub is considered Relaxed, while climbing Mount Doom is considered Demanding. Thus, climbing a mountain prompts Weariness-related Stamina tests more frequently than chatting in a pub.

BASE TIME: The amount of time in which a character can engage in a particular level of activity before prompting the first Stamina reaction test.

INTERVAL: The amount of time a character can sustain activity before having to make an additional Stamina test. This test is made as soon as the time interval passes, with modifiers from failed tests applying immediately.

EXTREME: Actions requiring vigorous activity, such as combat or sprinting. Some physical skill tests are considered Extreme. All combat-related skills are considered Extreme activities.

DEMANDING: Actions requiring rigorous, sustained activity or attention to detail, such as searching a house or climbing a mountain. Academic skills performed under pressure or used in a physical test—as well as many non-combat physical skills—are considered Demanding.

STANDARD: Actions requiring an average amount of activity, such as jogging, healing, searching a room, and routine uses of most physical skills. Most social tests are considered Standard.

RELAXED: Actions requiring minimal physical activity, such as walking at an easy pace, reading, and simple uses of most physical skills. Most academic tests are considered Relaxed.

The difficulty for Weariness-related Stamina tests is TN 10. Characters progress through six stages of Weariness, from Hale to Exhausted. The Weariness Levels Table illustrates the Weariness Levels and associated penalties. If a character fails a Stamina test to resist Weariness, he drops to the next-lowest weariness level and suffers the listed penalties. If the character continues to push himself and fails his Stamina tests, he becomes more weary and the penalties increase accordingly.

These penalties are cumulative with injury penalties. For example, a character who is both Injured (−2 to all tests) and Tired (−2 to all tests) suffers a cumulative −4 penalty to all tests. These penalties apply to future Stamina tests to resist Weariness. Should a character continue to push himself when Spent, he collapses if he fails another Stamina test.

A character can remain awake and active for a number of hours equal to

16 + his Vitality modifier without suffering from Weariness. Thus, a character with a +2 Vitality modifier can remain awake for 18 hours without problems. Beyond this point, the character must make a Stamina test (TN 10 + 1 per additional hour) every hour to avoid losing a Weariness Level.

These conditions are cumulative. If a character with a +2 Vitality modifier stays awake for 19 hours and then engages in a Demanding physical test for 1 hour, he makes a total of three Stamina tests. The first is for the loss of sleep. The second is for performing the hour-long Demanding test. The third is for remaining awake another hour. Should the character fail the first test, he suffers a −1 penalty to all the other tests for being Winded. Failing the second test (for the Demanding activity), he drops to Tired (−2). Failing the third test (for staying awake another hour), he drops to Weary (−4).

RECOVERING WEARINESS

> *' "Give me a row of orc-necks and room to swing and all weariness will fall from me!" '*
>
> *— Gimli, The Two Towers*

Regaining lost Weariness Levels is easy. All the character has to do is rest. Table 9.38 gives you the recovery times based on each level of activity. 'Rest' means sleeping, relaxing, or the like. The character can do nothing more strenuous than cooking or other light chores while resting.

On occasion, the subtle magic of Middle-earth affects a character's ability to overcome Weariness. The smell of *athelas* steeped in water is refreshing and invigorating (see page 125), and Legolas notes that the waters of the Nimrodel are said to be 'healing to the weary.' On the other hand, Frodo and Sam found it difficult to get proper rest while in Mordor. Thus, the Narrator may decrease or increase the amount of rest time needed to regain a lost Weariness Level in some areas or under some circumstances.

Other beneficial circumstances may help a character overcome the effects of Weariness. Gimli claims he can regain all lost Weariness Levels when he has some Orcs to attack, and the good news that Frodo still lives after Shelob's attack helps Sam to overcome his exhaustion and keep going. In appropriate circumstances, the Narrator may allow a character to spend a Courage Point to recover two lost Weariness Levels automatically due to inspiration or an increase in morale. Alternately, she may allow characters to make Stamina or Willpower tests to reduce or eliminate the penalties imposed by Weariness.

On the other hand, sometimes the situation makes a character feel fatigue more strongly. For example, as King Théoden notes, Weariness can more easily or quickly affect the aged. An Old character suffers a −4 test result penalty on all rolls to resist Weariness. An Aged character suffers a −8 penalty.

RECORDING DAMAGE AND WEARINESS ON YOUR CHARACTER SHEET

As a character sustains damage and suffers Weariness, it is important to track it on the character sheet. The character sheet contains 10 circles beside the headings 'Healthy, Dazed, Injured, Incapacitated, and Near Death.' When creating your character you should cross off a number of these circles equal to 10 minus your Health, counting in from right to left. If your Health exceeds 10, draw in the additional circles instead. Repeat this process for each Wound Level. If you're playing a Hobbit, cross out the Near Death section entirely too.

EXAMPLE: **If your character has Health 6, cross off the four right-most circles of each Wound Level. This leaves six circles in each Wound Level corresponding to your health. As you take damage, begin marking off circles from left to right, starting at Healthy. Once your character has taken six points of damage, all circles in 'Healthy' should be marked off, and he is then 'Dazed.' He suffers the −1 test result penalty for all tests for being Dazed, and he begins to accumulate damage in the 'Dazed' Wound Level.**

As soon as you lose the last point of damage in a Wound Level, you begin to suffer the injury effects (penalties) listed for the next lowest level on your character sheet. See the Effects of Injury Table.

For Weariness, which doesn't involve tracking points, the character sheet simply indicates the six levels. When your character loses a level, place an X next to it.

Be sure to use a pencil—not a pen—to make the marks for damage or Weariness. With any luck, you should be able to remove those with healing and rest.

TRAVELLING

'"Five-and-forty leagues as the crow flies
we have come, though many long miles
further our feet have walked."'
— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

Whether they go on long quests to destroy the devices of the Dark Lord, lead armies to the rescue of besieged cities, or journey across mountains and through forests to slay evil dragons, characters often have to travel over the face of Middle-earth. To determine how long it takes to travel from one place to another—barring attacks, disasters, and other delays—consult the Travel Speed Table (9.41) and the Middle-earth Travel Matrix Table (9.42). Of course, different characters may travel at different rates, and a group can only travel as fast as its slowest member.

The travel rates and modifiers factor a number of different elements. They assume, for instance, that the travellers take regular rests whenever needed, to keep themselves from becoming exhausted. Some races can go longer without resting than others, on average, which is why, for instance, a Dwarf's travel speed is greater than a Man's.

Regardless of the situation and modifiers, the minimum speed for any form of travel is .1 mile per hour, unless the Narrator rules otherwise.

EXAMPLE: *A band of bold heroes—two Hobbits, two Men, an Elf, and a Dwarf—set out from Hobbiton for Rivendell on foot. The Narrator decides that this is mostly 'easy ground,' so she allows an average base speed of 2.5 miles per hour. However, the Hobbits are a little slower (-.1), so the group can only travel at 2.4 miles per hour. Assuming they travel for eight hours a day, that's* $(2.4 \times 8 =)$ *19.2 miles per day. Since it's approximately 167 leagues (500 miles) from the Shire to Rivendell, their journey will take just over 26 days. This, however, assumes that the weather remains fine. If the group gets caught in a storm for four days (–.3 per hour), they lose* $(.3 \times 8 \times 4 =)$ *9.6 miles, adding half a day to their journey. If they leave the road for four days, travelling through very rough ground to avoid pursuers, their speed drops to .65 miles per hour, or 5.2 miles per day. At their normal rate of 19.2 miles per day for the rest of the trip, this adds* $([19.2 - 5.2] \times 4 \div 19.2 = 2.92)$ *nearly three whole days to their journey.*

TABLE 9.41: TRAVEL SPEED

TYPE OF TRAVEL	SPEED (MILES PER HOUR)
WALKING	
Easy ground*	2.5
Average ground	2.25
Rough ground**	1.25
Very rough ground***	.75 (or slower)
RIDING HORSE	
Easy ground*	3
Average ground	2.75
Rough ground**	1.25
Very rough ground***	Not possible
RIDING IN A WAGON	
Easy ground*	2.75
Average ground	2.25
Rough ground*	.5 (or slower)
Very rough ground***	Not possible
WATER TRAVEL	
Average water	2.8
Rough water	2.25
Very rough water	Not possible

MODIFIERS	SPEED (MILES PER HOUR)
ENCUMBRANCE	
Light burden•	.2
Average burden ••	±0
Heavy burden •••	Half normal rate
Very heavy burden ••••	Quarter normal rate
FOOT PACE	
Walk	±0
Jog	+1
Run	+3
Sprint	+6
HORSE TYPE	
Pony	-.25
Average horse	±0
Horse of Rohan	+1
Mearas/Elven horse	+1.5 (or more)
Horse pace	
Walk	±0
Trot	+2
Run	+4
Gallop	+8
INJURY	1 per −1 test result penalty
RACE	
Dwarf	+.2
Elf	+.3
Hobbit	−.1
Man	±0
Orc	+.2
SIZE OF GROUP	
1–10	±0
11–100	−.1
01–1,000	−.2
1,001–5,000	−.3
5,001 or more	−.4
STEALTHY TRAVEL	Half normal rate
TIME OF DAY	
Daytime	+.0
Nighttime	−.5
WATER TRAVEL MODIFIERS	
Drifting with the current	±0
Paddling with the current	+1.3
Paddling against the current	−1
SAILING WITH THE CURRENT	
Strong current	+8
Average current	+5
Weak current	+3
SAILING AGAINST THE CURRENT	
Strong current	−8
Average current	−5
Weak current	−3
SAILING WITH THE WIND	
Strong wind	+8
Average wind	+5
Weak wind	+3
SAILING AGAINST THE WIND	
Strong wind	−5
Average wind	−3
Weak wind	−1.5
WEATHER	
Fine/normal	±0
Rainfall	−.1
Storm	−.3
Snowfall	−.2 (or more)

*(meadows, plains)
**(hills, low mountains, forests, snow)
***(mountains, thick forests, swamps)
•(Str x less than 1 pound)
••(Str x 1–10 pounds)
•••(Str x 11–20 pounds)
••••(Str x 21–30 pounds)

TABLE 9.42: MIDDLE-EARTH TRAVEL MATRIX

Indicated distances are in leagues (1 league = 3 miles). Most distances are 'as the crow flies.' The actual distance on the ground may be up to 50% greater (or even longer).

	Bree	Dale	Edoras	Isengard	Lórien	Minas Morgul	Minas Tirith[2]	Pelargir	Rivendell	The Shire[1]	Tharbad
Bree	0	225	200	150	140	290	285	315	100	40	67
Dale	225	0	235	225	145	240	245	290	125	270	220
Edoras	200	235	0	48	100	122	102	117	172	225	133
Isengard	150	225	48	0	83	165	150	163	135	175	83
Lórien	140	145	100	83	0	162	158	192	77	183	100
Minas Morgul	290	240	122	165	162	0	15	54	215	327	240
Minas Tirith[2]	285	245	102	150	158	15	0	432	200	321	229
Pelargir	315	290	117	163	192	54	432	0	243	342	252
Rivendell	100	125	172	135	77	215	200	243	0	167	100
The Shire[1]	40	270	225	175	183	327	321	342	167	0	90
Tharbad	67	220	133	83	100	240	229	252	100	90	0

[1] Distances from the Shire are measured from Hobbiton.

[2] This is a journey by water, up or down the Anduin. The river lies from one to five leagues from Minas Tirith itself, and the docks at Harlond are approximately 3.5 miles overland from the city.

Chapter Ten

SAGA AND GRANDEUR

' "Do we walk in legends...or in the daylight?"
"A man may do both," said Aragorn. "For not we but those who come after will make the legends of our time." '
— *The Two Towers*

Now that you've learned how to create characters and how the rules of the CODA SYSTEM work, it's time to discuss the art and science of *narrating*: of setting up chronicles (game 'campaigns' of multiple stories linked by common characters and events) and chapters (individual game stories, or 'scenarios'). This chapter and the one that follows describe what it takes to be the Narrator for your gaming group. It's a challenge that requires both effort and responsibility, but in many ways it's the most rewarding role you can have at the gaming table, for it makes you the person most responsible for planning and bringing to pass the stories your players create through their characters' adventures.

ELEMENTS OF EPIC FANTASY

The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game is a little different from most other fantasy roleplaying games. It isn't about one-game adventures, delving in dungeons and caverns, slaughtering hordes of monsters, gathering treasure and loot, or the like. You can play it that way, of course, but it's really about vast, sweeping stories—sagas of wonder and adventure in which heroes save the world from the deadliest perils. In short, it's an *epic fantasy*.

To run a game so that it has the proper 'feel'—not only of epic fantasy in general but *Tolkienesque* epic fantasy in particular—you, the Narrator, have to be aware of and understand the elements an epic fantasy contains. The players should know about them too, at least on a basic level. But since you're the person who plans chapters and chronicles, starts the story, and sets the mood through your narration

Elements of Epic Fantasy

and choice of scenes, you must keep these elements in mind more than anyone else involved in your game. If you don't, your game may quickly veer off course, and you may end up with a chronicle that doesn't seem nearly as much like *The Lord of the Rings* as you want it to.

The elements described below aren't discussed in any specific order. No one of them is necessarily more important than any other, though some tend to receive less emphasis in a gaming context than they do in a novel. You have to decide which ones you think work best for the chronicle you have in mind, as well as which ones best suit your preferred style of running games.

HISTORY, LORE, AND SETTING

'"I have seen three ages in the West of the world, and many defeats, and many fruitless victories."'
— Elrond, The Fellowship of the Ring

Epic stories differ from other types of stories in their depth and breadth, which in turn provides verisimilitude: the appearance of 'reality' or actual existence. Our own world has thousands of years of history, featuring events both major and minor, which have shaped it and influence our lives today. Similarly, to create the verisimilitude and epic feel you want, an epic fantasy game must have a similar wealth of detail in the form of history and lore. Without it, the story seems shallow and meaningless. The players don't comprehend the significance of their characters' actions, feel as if they truly are great heroes gifted with a destiny to oppose the forces of evil, or glimpse the panoramic background that establishes the world as 'real.'

In most roleplaying games, to get this sort of epic feel, you have to create your own world or purchase a book describing a world created by someone else. But fortunately, this is *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*. It's set in one of the most elaborately detailed and developed fantasy worlds ever created, a world featuring its own developed languages, thousands of years of history, and many different races and peoples, each with their own customs. With the recent launch of the new trilogy of films, more people than ever have visited the amazing lands of Middle-earth, although it's a world you and your players may have been familiar with for years if you've read the well-loved books that describe it in all its glorious detail.

Professor Tolkien has already done a lot of the work needed to create the level of detail required for an epic fantasy. All you have to do is learn what he's done, if you don't know already. This book can help you with that task. It summarizes the basic information about Middle-earth, its history, and its lore. If you need or want to know more, all you have to do is consult Tolkien's works themselves or reference books related to them. Additionally, Decipher plans to release an ongoing series of supplements to this tome, expanding upon the material already herein.

THE NATURAL WORLD

'[A]ll those hills were crowned with green mounds, and on some were standing stones, pointing upwards like jagged teeth out of green gums.'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

If you look at the cover of most editions of Tolkien's works, you don't see pictures of characters or events. You see landscapes. The natural world forms an integral and important element of epic fantasy, one Tolkien stresses by devoting many words to describe the natural settings in which his characters find themselves. From vast, sweeping, majestic mountain vistas to the desolation and ruin of Mordor, from the pastoral hedgerows of The Shire to the magical and ageless beauty of Lothlórien, natural settings contribute to the feel of *The Lord of the Rings*, and so should they to your chronicle.

Emphasizing this element requires a little attention and work on your part, but it pays dividends well in excess of the effort. The simplest way to evoke the wonders of nature is

to make sure you describe them in your narration. Don't just say, 'You spend the whole day walking. About sunset, you find a cave where you can make camp.' Instead, focus on the world around the characters, describing it in enough detail for the players to visualize it: 'You spend the whole day walking through forested hills and dells. The hills gradually become steeper and rockier as you approach the mountains themselves. The snow-clad peaks seem to glare down at you, as if daring you to brave a crossing.'

If you're willing to put in a little more work, look through magazines or browse the internet and other sources for pictures of landscapes and interesting natural features. When the PCs reach an appropriate location, show them the picture, and tell them that's where they are. Perhaps even use a bit of appropriate music to further set the stage. This speeds up your game and helps everyone get into the mood. Sometimes a picture really is worth a thousand words.

A WORLD OF RESPECT

Middle-earth is a world in which the good people treat each other with respect at almost all times. It's particularly easy to see this when observing the interactions between nobles and the common folk. Nobles—whether hereditary like Denethor II or based on wealth and reputation like Frodo—receive deference and respect, even affection, from other people. They, in turn, work to uphold the ideals of the nobility and do what they can to deserve their positions.

Sam, for instance, treats Frodo deferentially, not because Sam is an innately servile person—he isn't, as his actions as Ring-bearer and eventual position of prominence in the Shire demonstrate. It's because he's been raised to think of nobles like Frodo as his betters, so he gives them the respect that they deserve. Frodo, to his credit, actually does deserve the respect accorded him, and he treats Sam in a way that inspires such feelings.

Of course, sometimes you can turn this deference on its head. Obeying your 'betters' is just fine when they deserve it—whether because of actions current or past—but blind obedience is not heroic. Denethor's servants are as obedient to his will as Sam is to Frodo's, for instance, but their unwavering servitude nearly leads to Faramir's death until one of Denethor's men, Beregond, rebels. Similarly, Orcs often represent unreasoning submission to a cruel authority to whom they are little more than eminently replaceable cogs.

Maintaining this element of generally healthy respect for good authority in your roleplaying chronicle may prove difficult because some players tend to be rebels. They don't like taking orders—or even suggestions—even from NPCs notably wiser and more powerful than themselves. They go out of their way to defy and resist efforts to control or guide their actions.

Admittedly, there's justification for a little of this behaviour in *The Lord of the Rings*. Éomer, Faramir, and Beregond, for example, all defy the rules to serve the greater good. The difference is, they don't do so on a routine basis. They love their societies and respect their rules, and they only break them when it's absolutely necessary.

The best way to keep player rebelliousness under control is to discuss it with the players in advance. Before you begin your chronicle, make sure the players understand this concept of respectfulness in the game. Players with characters in positions of obedience or deference should appropriately obey or defer in most situations.

They should realize—both through common sense and dramatic cues—when the time comes to break the rules, but their default behaviour should follow the general pattern. If a player can't, or won't, comply, you should feel free to deduct experience points for a particular adventure in which the character acts inappropriately.

It's even better if you can work to show the character the error of his ways within the game. Those that act rudely toward others who deserve better are sure to be shunned by respectable society. This can cause many doors to be slammed in the face of the characters, both figuratively and literally. Meanwhile, those that treat others kindly are sure to be shown respect by most good people they meet. This can certainly turn out to be its own reward.

PRESERVING THE GOOD

' "So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us." '

— The Fellowship of the Ring

Most epic fantasies have a strong, innate streak of conservatism to them. They depend on the fundamental assumption that the world as it currently exists is generally a good place and should be preserved as it is. A few epic fantasies involve overthrowing a great evil to re-establish the world as it was, but that's only a variation on this theme.

Of course, preserving the inherent goodness of the world—or effecting a return to a former era or time of goodness—does require the characters to initiate one major change to the current situation: the destruction or removal of the Force of Evil (see below). But that's not so much a change as it is a defense against the evil working to change matters for the worse. If the heroes don't eliminate the evil, the world is bound to become a darker, nastier place. The heroes work to prevent that change, not to create change of their own.

Incorporating this element into your games requires two things. First, you have to create a 'good,' a status quo, for the PCs to preserve. This then becomes a part of their mission. This could be maintaining peace in Wilderland, keeping some part of Eriador unspoiled, or preventing the destruction of Rivendell. It could even be the same general goal of the Wise: protecting and preserving all of Middle-earth from Sauron so the Free Peoples can chart the course of their own destinies.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, your players have to understand what's at stake. If the players don't grasp the reason for what their characters are doing and accept it as a valid goal, your chronicle suffers from the very beginning. Fortunately, most of them probably understand the objective already—or will just as soon as you make it obvious through the events of the game. If you're worried about this, just take a few minutes before you start the chronicle to explain what you have in mind. You could even do this during character creation so the players can create PCs suited to the nature of the chronicle you plan to run.

THE FORCE OF EVIL

' "The Enemy is so strong and terrible." '
— Frodo, The Fellowship of the Ring

An epic fantasy requires an epic enemy. The PCs aren't trying to solve a murder mystery, gather treasure, or anything as limited as that. They're trying to save the world from a Force of Evil. In Middle-earth, Sauron fills this role.

To qualify as a Force of Evil, an enemy has to do more than simply embody the attributes of evil through his behaviour or supernatural nature. He has to be so powerful that only by uniting a great force in opposition to him can the heroes hope to defeat him. The player characters can never oppose the Force of Evil directly. Any group of PCs that tries to fight Sauron directly is certain to quickly perish.

The days when Men and Elves had the power to grapple with Sauron himself are three thousand years gone. Instead, they must oppose him indirectly, by defeating or destroying the minions through which he acts and by confronting his evil with their heroic hearts, determination, and wisdom, the greatest weapons they have against him. Their defeat of the Force of Evil signals the end of the chronicle—at least for now.

Depending on the scope and timeframe of your campaign, you may not want to use Sauron as your Force of Evil. Substituting someone else—Saruman, one of the Nazgûl, a powerful sorcerer living in long-forgotten Angmar who is rising up in response to Sauron's return to Mordor—is a simple matter. Just create the right NPC, give him sufficient power to overwhelm and destroy the PCs if they challenge him directly, and then figure out what steps they can take to defeat him. Going through these steps should give you lots of ideas for chapters, scenes, and important NPCs. After all, every Force of Evil needs a plan of conquest and a few powerful lieutenants to carry the plan out for him.

HIGH STAKES

' "If he regains it, your valour is vain, and his victory will be swift and complete: so complete that none can foresee the end of it while this world lasts." '
— Gandalf, The Return of the King

The heroes of an epic fantasy do not get involved in trivial adventures, minor escapades, or trifling quests. By definition, an epic fantasy involves epic goals. The heroes are trying to save the world, and their every adventure relates to that. Occasionally, equally heroic goals—like saving captured Hobbits from Orcs—arise, but thanks to the power of fate (see below) these always tie back in to the main goal somehow.

Of course, the heroes—the player characters in your chronicle—may not always realize the significance or gravity of their immediate objectives. While you as Narrator know they have to deliver a seemingly innocent message to trigger the events that will gain them a valuable and trusted new ally—or they have to pursue the foul Orcs to regain the Hobbits, to eventually come into conflict with Saruman and remove the threat he presents before confronting Sauron—they may have no inkling of the true import of their actions. This heightens the dramatic tension of the decision, but it may lead to them making the wrong choice. As Narrator, you must be ready for such difficulties. Prepare in advance so that whatever decision the characters make, it furthers their overall goal of saving the world. They may suffer penalties for making the worse choice—they could earn fewer experience points, or they could lose the assistance of an NPC they failed to save—but they shouldn't completely eliminate their chance to succeed unless they make extremely foolish or ill-considered decisions.

WHITE AND BLACK

> *' "You will hear today all that you need in order to understand the purposes of the Enemy. There is naught that you can do, other than to resist...But you do not stand alone." '*
>
> *— Elrond, The Fellowship of the Ring*

Characters in epic fantasy are drawn in stark terms. Good is Good and evil is Evil, and it's easy to tell who fits into each category. Unlike many roleplaying games, which use moral ambiguity and conflict as a major element of the setting, *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* features a more or less absolute division between Right and Wrong. The occasional exceptions—Saruman, for example—either illustrate the rule or become victims of the Force of Evil, or both.

It's especially important to make sure the player characters—the heroes and protagonists of the story you're creating—follow this rule. The quickest, surest way to destroy the epic, Tolkienesque feel of your chronicle is to have player characters with significant moral conflicts, beliefs, or opinions that differ strongly from the heroic norm or whose behaviour makes their role as heroes questionable at best. Take a look at 'The Qualities of Heroes' on pages 50-51 for guidelines on appropriate traits for player characters.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with a character having a minor negative quality or two, like Boromir's overwhelming desire to protect Gondor. After all, overcoming one's limitations is part of being a hero. Anyone can be a hero when things are easy. But these character flaws must not be such an important aspect of his personality that they prevent him from acting heroically. Despite his desire to use the Ring against Sauron, Boromir didn't take advantage of numerous opportunities to wrest the Ring from Frodo. Only when he finally lost control of himself—when, in game terms, he became Corrupt—did he try to do so, and even then, he tried to persuade Frodo before resorting to force. A character with a flaw like that doesn't hurt your chronicle at all. But one who 'will stop at nothing to gain the Ring' or who 'doesn't care what happens to others as long as he comes out all right,' to take just two examples, can quickly ruin the feel of your game.

Similarly, Orcs, half-Orcs, and other servants of the Shadow are evil. They aren't misunderstood, the victims of non-nurturing cultures, downtrodden and oppressed members of the lower class, or anything like that. They are evil by choice and are not capable of becoming good 'in the right circumstances.' Saruman, for example, was offered plenty of opportunities to change his ways, and he refused them all. Orcs and Trolls, by their very natures, can't act in good ways. If you introduce a group of 'nice Orcs' or 'a friendly dragon' into your chronicle, you so thoroughly shatter the preconceptions of how Middle-earth works that your chronicle may never recover.

HEROISM

> *' "I will take the Ring," he said, "though I do not know the way." '*
>
> *— Frodo, The Fellowship of the Ring*

A good way of summarizing the 'Qualities of Heroes' sidebar on pages 50-51 is that last word: heroes. Characters appropriate for epic fantasy in general, and *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* in particular, are *heroes.* They don't go on adventures and quests for self-aggrandizement, money, fame, the chance to get into a good fight, or the like. They adventure to serve the greater good, in a spirit of self-sacrifice to help the world—just like Frodo agreeing to take the Ring to the Fire, or Boromir and the Men of Gondor struggling to hold back the Shadow. Of course, heroes may acquire glory and riches along the way, but that's not their motivation for adventuring. They go on adventures because they must, to save the world.

In the modern day, when many people are cynical and distrust the government, and con artists take advantage of tragedies and disasters to prey on innocent people, it can be hard for gamers to think like this. It would be easy to create a character whose attitudes mirror modern bitterness, self-absorption, hunger for power and riches, and jadedness. But those attitudes are completely inappropriate for *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* PCs. Think for a moment about the members of the Fellowship. Are any of them cynical, bitter, or angry at the world? Of course not. They may occasionally suffer from moments of despair, but that despair always passes quickly or gives way to a grim resolve to fight until their last breath. Characters who give in to despair, like Denethor, are tragic and pitiable, but they're not heroes—and they're not good player characters, either.

THE NAIVE HERO

'"I am not made for perilous quests. I wish I had never seen the Ring! Why did it come to me? Why was I chosen?"'
— Frodo, The Fellowship of the Ring

In most epic fantasy fiction, including *The Lord of the Rings*, there's at least one hero with an additional quality: He's naive. He finds himself thrust into a situation he doesn't understand, confronted by people and beings of immense power, and he must do the best he can with what few abilities he has at his command. In Professor Tolkien's epic, Frodo fulfils this role, with Merry, Sam, and Pippin providing secondary support.

In a novel, a character like this provides the author a way to tell the reader what's going on. The reader is as uninformed as the naive hero, and as the wise wizards, bold warriors, and masters of lore explain to him what's happening, they educate the reader as well. During the course of the quest that forms the central premise of the story, the naive hero grows and learns, shedding the negative aspects of his naïveté without losing the qualities of innocence and kindness that accompany it.

Furthermore, one of the central premises of *The Lord of the Rings* is that, for reasons unknown even to the Wise, sometimes a person seemingly weak and powerless—like Frodo or Gollum—can accomplish great deeds where lords, nobles, and wizards could not. The ennoblement of the ignoble factors into many of the adventures depicted in epic fantasy, particularly Tolkien's works.

Recreating these aspects of fantasy fiction in your game can be difficult at best. First, most, if not all, of your players have probably read *The Lord of the Rings*—or at least seen the films—and are reasonably familiar with the background of the world. It's hard to fake enough ignorance to play the naive hero. Second, even if all the players know the basics of Tolkien's works and world, it's unlikely any one of them knows Middle-earth well enough to effortlessly step into a Gandalf-like role and supply the other players with information when they need it—or, better yet, to do it when you need him to and to refrain when you don't. Third, to play a naive hero, a character usually has to start out with no order (see page 79) or as less powerful and skilled than other characters, and many players don't want to handicap themselves that way. Unless one of your players is suitable to the role and willing to take it on, it may be best to chalk this one up to the irreconcilable differences between games and books.

THE QUEST

'At that moment Elrond came out with Gandalf, and he called the Company to him..."The Ring-bearer is setting out on the Quest of Mount Doom."'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

Almost by definition, an epic fantasy must involve a quest of some kind: a mission upon which the fate of the world hinges. This may be, as in *The Lord of the Rings*, a literal physical journey to reach a particular place to perform a task of utmost importance; or it may focus on a broader goal, such as raising an army of the Free Peoples to oppose the horde of Orcs on its way to attack a great stronghold of the Wise. Without a grand goal such as this, characters may participate in a fantasy story, but it's not an *epic* story.

The quest is more than just a physical journey though. It's also a spiritual one for at least some of the characters. For Frodo, it's the journey from wishing Bilbo had killed Gollum to befriending the poor wretch and eventually refusing to take up arms against anyone. For Sam, it's the journey from simple but loyal service to the point where he's ready to take up the responsibilities of marriage, fatherhood, and leadership. For Aragorn, it's the change from being Chieftain of the Dúnedain to King of the Reunited Kingdom.

Incorporating this element into your gaming chronicle requires two things: one from you and one from your players. For your part, you have to conceive and design a chronicle that has a grand, epic goal as its central theme. It need not be as enormous a goal as 'destroy the One Ring.' Perhaps it's 'prevent the evil of Angmar from rising again,' or 'defeat the great Easterling empire that now threatens Gondor.' But it must be sufficiently clear and momentous that the PCs understand it and do not waver from it. For the players' part, at least one of them must design a character capable of undertaking a related spiritual journey, be that growth from ignorance to wisdom, the assumption of some great birthright, or the like. Put those two elements together, and you're bound to create a wonderful epic quest.

MAGIC SUBTLE AND POWERFUL

'"I am a servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the Flame of Anor. You cannot pass."'
— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

Magic is a unique and important part of Middle-earth, possessed of important qualities that contribute to the flavour of the setting. It is subtle, pervading much of the world in ways characters appreciate only semiconsciously, if at all. But in the hands of a spellcaster, such as a magician or wizard, magic can become a powerful tool.

With it, a character can light fires, awe his enemies, guard his allies from harm, or accomplish many other wondrous feats. It is much more than simply a weapon for use against one's foes.

To many, the magic of Middle-earth seems low powered or weak, since it does not allow a magician to effortlessly strike down the servants of the Enemy, collapse mountains, summon demons, or turn kings into mindless puppets. It would be more accurate to say that the magic of Middle-earth is different, neither better nor worse than the magic of other fantasy settings. The magic of Middle-earth, though subtle, can nevertheless be quite powerful. Witness Gandalf's confrontations with the Balrog, Saruman, and the Witch-king.

But even characters possessed of great power use it as seldom as possible. They conceal it, deny it, or play it down. Power, by and large, is corrupting and dangerous. Embracing it too closely, as Saruman did, leads to downfall. In more concrete gaming terms, the use of magic can reveal a character's locations or power and is tiring to use. Even the most powerful of wizards, like Gandalf, prefers to conserve his might, saving it for the times when he truly needs it.

In many ways, this is the most difficult epic fantasy theme to game. Players, having characters with power, prefer to use that power. If they know spells like *Lightning* or *Flame of Anor* or *Slumber*, they're inclined to cast those spells again and again, risking Weariness because they enjoy exercising power—even though Gandalf, in similar situations, typically prefers to rely on Intimidate or his sword Glamdring.

If you want players with spellcasting characters to accept and follow this 'denial of power' concept, you can encourage them in several ways. First and foremost, don't design chapters or scenes where they have no recourse other than to use spells. If you place them in situations where invoking magic is the only viable alternative, they aren't likely to hesitate to resort to it. Give them options. Structure your adventures so that seemingly minor spells—like *Create Light* or *Kindle Fire*—become useful and important.

Second, make sure spellcasters have skills and abilities they can use besides magic. Even a few ranks in Armed Combat, Inspire, Intimidate, Ranged Combat, and other such skills provide alternatives to spellcasting, particularly for characters who cannot risk losing Weariness Levels. Perhaps you can supplement these abilities with a minor enchanted item or two, improving their potential utility while still allowing the character to feel like he's using magic.

Third, give spellcasting characters important tasks to perform that remove them from situations in which they could abuse their magical powers. For example, during the Battle of the Pelennor Fields, Gandalf wasn't out in the midst of battle, using fire and lightning to strike down Orcs and Haradrim and Nazgûl. He was busy rallying the defenders along the walls, escorting wains of the wounded, and preventing Denethor from killing Faramir. Only when his presence was absolutely crucial—when Faramir needed help to reach the wall, when the Witch-king tried to enter the City—did he engage in combat, and only then for a few moments. You can do the same thing by devising important tasks to occupy magicians without requiring the frequent casting of spells.

TRAGEDY

'"Well, here at last...comes the end of our fellowship in Middle-earth. Go in peace! I will not say: do not weep; for not all tears are an evil."'
— Gandalf, The Return of the King

While, ultimately, epic fantasies are tales of heroism, triumph, and wonder, often subtle elements of tragedy work their way into the story, providing a poignant counterpoint to the heroes' victory. In *The Lord of the Rings*, for example, the defeat of Sauron means the diminishment and passing of the Elves. The deaths of Théoden and many other heroes also focus attention on the often tragic nature of war and life.

This element typically has much less impact in a gaming chronicle than in a tale. Though players can become quite devoted to their characters, they tend to be much less interested in NPCs, even major ones. Killing an NPC, or inflicting some other tragedy on him, just doesn't affect them—unless you've done a fantastic job of developing that NPC, making him a part of the characters' lives, and showing his importance to the world.

You may have more luck evoking sorrow among the players if the tragedy besets one or more player characters—but make sure the players in question are willing to have you do something like that to their characters, or that they bring it on themselves through foolish decisions. It can ruin the game for a player if you radically change his character.

Most players resist the change and its consequences as much as they can. If, on the other hand, you discuss the situation with a player and he's willing to take on the roleplaying challenges this opportunity presents, you can proceed without worry.

FATE, FREE WILL, AND PROPHECY

'"I can put it no plainer than by saying that Bilbo was meant to find the Ring, and not by its maker. In which case you were also meant to have it."'
— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

Perhaps the most nebulous—and yet also most important—theme of epic fantasy, and particularly of Tolkien's works, is the existence of free will and its consequences.

The 'Free Peoples' aren't called that for no reason. They have free will and must exercise it responsibly. Except for creatures like Orcs, who were made evil and have no choice but to remain evil, thinking people choose whether to act heroically or evilly, and they must live with the consequences of their decisions. Even the Force of Evil, Sauron, *chose* to become evil and stay evil, through exercise of his own free will. He is evil in part because he would deny the free will of others.

Paradoxically, epic fantasy also contains heavy elements of fate and prophecy, which seem to deny free will. However, as applied, these elements don't deny the importance of free will. They enhance it. Bilbo and Frodo were fated to have the Ring, but the choice of what to do with it was left to their free will. Prophecies and foretellings may spur characters to action, but they do not force them to do anything. The characters must decide for themselves what the information means and how to use it. In contrast, the Force of Evil and its servants often try to deny, avoid, or even exploit prophecy, which only drives them to take incorrect or imprudent actions that lead to the prophecy's fulfilment.

For more on using fate and prophecy in your game, see page 165.

RUNNING A CHRONICLE

In conclusion, here are a few more suggestions for running epic fantasy gaming chronicles.

AN EPIC BEFORE THE EPIC

It may seem a little strange or difficult to try to create an epic story in the period before the War of the Ring. *The Lord of the Rings* is, after all, one of the grandest epics in modern literature. From the players' or PCs' perspective, the big epic is still to come.

Don't let this thought discourage you! Just because the books don't mention any epic adventures during this period doesn't mean they never occurred. It just means word of them never reached the Wise or that they chose not to speak loudly about whatever they did learn. You can easily arrange your chronicle so its major events take place far away from the centres of civilization. Reports of battles in the far North or East, for example, may never reach Gondor or Rivendell.

More importantly, whether anyone hears of it or not, it's still possible for you to create a grand, epic story involving the fate of the world before the War of the Ring. Even though the Ring is lurking out there as a threat to the Free Peoples, it's not the only danger in Middle-earth. Many of the possible enemies mentioned elsewhere in this chapter and this book—the remnants of Angmar, the Orcs of the North, the Blue Wizards, powerful Easterling sorcerers, and more—could arise to imperil the West. Perhaps Sauron even orchestrates such at attack in an effort to weaken his foes. Using this as your backdrop, you and your players can create wondrous epic stories even though there's another, equally important, epic waiting in the wings.

A JOURNEY OF MANY STEPS

' "Mordor!" he muttered under his breath. "If I must go there, I wish I could come there quickly and make an end!" '

— Frodo, The Two Towers

One of the difficulties that epic goals pose for gaming chronicles is that they take a long time to reach. The PCs can't cross the world, fight their way through Sauron's armies, and reach Orodruin in just two or three gaming sessions. Ideally, it should take many sessions, over months, to build up to the ultimate conclusion of the saga you're creating.

But many players find that a little frustrating. Sometimes it seems as if they're not making any progress or getting any closer to their goal. The epic conclusion isn't just distant. It's remote, seemingly unattainable and unreachable. That saps enthusiasm and causes other problems.

To get around this, structure your epic so that it has many lesser objectives along the way. The ultimate conclusion of the epic is but the culmination of a series of triumphs—and some defeats—the PCs achieve along the way. This works well with story arcs. Each arc constitutes a part of overall story but has its own 'mini-goal' the characters can see and quickly attain, relatively speaking.

For example, suppose your chronicle focuses on preventing the evil of Angmar from arising to overwhelm Eriador. 'Defeating Carangul, the Red Sorcerer, heir to the powers and purpose of the Witch-king' is the goal of your epic. But that's going to take a long time, so you create a series of stories and story arcs that give the characters more discrete objectives during their quest. The chronicle begins when Elrond asks them to find out what happened to a Ranger who has disappeared. Finding the missing Ranger and determining what happened to him is the object of the first story arc, and the conclusion leads to the next arc. The characters discover that an evil power has awakened in the North. It captured the Ranger and broke his will with sorcery, turning him to its own uses—and it has plans to conquer Eriador.

In part two of the chronicle, the characters' objective is to identify this power and hinder its plans so they have time to rally the Free Peoples to oppose it. During the second story arc, they seek to learn of the power, begin to suspect that he is Carangul, and have an initial confrontation with him, from which he flees. During that encounter, you set up the third story arc.

The third arc starts shortly after the confrontation, when the PCs realize the significance of a clue left behind by Carangul. He is massing a great army of Orcs, particularly at Gundabad. If the characters don't find a way to destroy or defeat these Orcs, the North has no hope of resisting. Now they have a new objective: to journey to Gundabad and find a way to remove the Orc threat.

But that's not enough to defeat Carangul. He still has great powers and a force of other Orcs, fell beasts, and trolls near Carn Dûm. The objective of the final story arc, and of the epic as a whole, is to confront him once more and defeat him forever.

By planning a chronicle of this sort, you retain the epic feel you want, and you keep the players from becoming frustrated and upset because their goal is so far removed. It also helps you run the game, since you have a general idea of where the story should go and can more easily plan adventures, drop useful clues, and steer the narrative.

Chapter Eleven

STORIED HEIGHTS AND FIRELIT HALLS

'The Dark Tower had been rebuilt, it was said. From there the power was spreading far and wide...'
— The Fellowship of the Ring.

Now that you're aware of the elements of epic fantasy and how they function in Professor Tolkien's world, it's time to learn a little more about the nuts and bolts of narrating a chronicle—how to plan, and then with your friends create, wondrous Tolkienesque stories featuring the player characters.

◆

THE NARRATOR'S ROLE

In a group of people playing *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*, there's one who stands a little apart from the rest: the Narrator. The Narrator doesn't have a player character like the other players. Instead, she's the person who plans the chapters the PCs adventure in, which makes her the primary, though by no means only, architect of the story the group creates. She plays the part of all the NPCs the PCs encounter, adjudicates rules questions, and keeps the game running as smoothly as possible.

Being the Narrator can be tough. You have to prepare the chronicle and then prepare to run each chapter of the chronicle, monitor what each of the players are doing with their characters, and sometimes make difficult decisions during the game. But it's also one of the most rewarding things you can do as a gamer. It allows you to unleash your creativity and come up with quests, enemies, intriguing NPCs, and dozens of other details that make the game so special for you and your friends. In a sense, it puts you in the driver's seat—though the players help you steer.

Creating and Running the Chronicle

Besides creating chapters, as Narrator, you have three major responsibilities. You have to know the rules, know the setting, and maintain game balance.

Knowing the rules is pretty self-evident. As the Narrator, you have to decide how the rules apply in any given case, particularly if this book is unclear or hasn't covered a particular situation that arises in your game. You also have to use and interpret the rules consistently so the players don't become confused and upset by your actions. You can't do that if you don't understand the rules in the first place. Before you start a chronicle, read over Chapter Nine thoroughly and make sure you understand it completely.

Knowing the setting is also important. If you're going to run a gaming chronicle in Middle-earth, you have to know something about Middle-earth, or the chronicle isn't going to make sense. You have to understand what Arnor and Gondor are, how Orcs differ from Uruk-hai, the major enemies facing the PCs, where the Shire's located, and things like that. This book provides a lot of the information you need, and of course Professor Tolkien's own work (and the many reference books about it) can help you learn anything else. Look also for continuing supplements from Decipher in *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* line.

Maintaining game balance is the trickiest part of your job. 'Game balance' means all the characters have the proper relationship to each other in terms of what they can and cannot do. Each of the player characters should be roughly as powerful and competent as the others—unless a player consents to having a weaker character—and that the enemies they face are strong enough to challenge them, but not so strong that the PCs have no chance to defeat them. There are no rules for maintaining game balance. It's more of an art you have to learn through experience. But it's not as difficult as it sounds. After running just a few games, you should develop a feel for when something is balanced (and thus good for your game) or unbalanced (and thus could have a negative impact).

CHRONICLES AND CHAPTERS

When you decided to narrate a game, you're probably going to structure it using *chapters* and *chronicles*. A chapter is an individual adventure, sometimes taking only one game session, other times several. A chronicle is the sum total of the adventures you run featuring the same group of player characters and, typically, focusing on a single overarching goal: destroy the threat of Angmar, overthrow the realm of Sauron, make Mirkwood safe for Elves and Men again, or the like. Each chapter concentrates on specific objectives, each a step toward the achievement of the chronicle's ultimate goal. In this way, game by game, you and your players create a marvellous epic fantasy story.

For example, consider the events of *The Lord of the Rings*. The Fellowship's journey from Rivendell to the West-gate of Moria would comprise one chapter. The trip through Moria, their sojourn in Lórien, and their travel down the Anduin and the breaking of the Fellowship are other chapters. Put those chapters—and the others described over the course of the trilogy—together, and you've got a chronicle.

CREATING CHRONICLES

Your first job as Narrator is usually to make some decisions about the nature of the chronicle you want to run. The various types of chronicles—including the timeframe in which you set it, and its primary goal—are discussed below. You also have to decide whether your chronicle is going to be episodic or serial.

An episodic chronicle has relatively little connection between chapters. Each chapter features the same group of player characters, but their adventures in one chapter don't relate to, or strongly influence, what happens in a later chapter. In one chapter, the player characters might save the Hobbits of the Shire from an attack by a roving band of Orcs. In the next, they might explore Tharbad in search of a long-lost relic, with no explanation for what happened between the two adventures, or any relation between them.

A serial chronicle, on the other hand, establishes strong connections between the chapters. Each chapter flows from the one prior to it, with the events in one chapter affecting what happens in the next. For example, suppose that in the first chapter, the characters save the Shire from an Orc attack. They find a strange badge on one of the Orcs. Thinking it might be important, in the second chapter the heroes journey to Bree to consult a loremaster one of the characters knows, and along the way they are pursued by—nd eventually slay—a fell beast from the Barrow-downs. In the third chapter, the loremaster tells them the badge bears the defaced symbol of an inn that once existed in Tharbad, so the characters journey to Tharbad and investigate. What they find leads in turn to the fourth chapter, and so on.

Running a serial chronicle usually requires more work on your part. You have to think ahead, do a little advance planning and preparation, and so forth. On the other hand, it usually creates a more satisfying gaming experience.

STORY ARCS

If you want some of the benefits of the serial chronicle but can't—or don't want to—put in the amount of work necessary, you can compromise by using *story arcs* in your chronicle. A story arc is a group of two to three chapters that form a story of its own. The chapters within the arc are serial, but one story arc during a chronicle doesn't necessarily have to connect directly to any other story arc.

For example, the three chapters described above might constitute the 'Eriadorian Orc Mystery' story arc. When you finish it, you might start a 'War in the Troll-fells' story arc. The first arc has nothing to do with the other, but each arc includes several chapters that follow one from the other in serial fashion.

THE SETTING

You should also give some thought to the setting of your chronicle. Basically, you have two choices. You can restrict it to one part of Middle-earth, developing that region in detail so your PCs have a lot to do there, or you can allow your PCs broader scope to wander the face of Middle-earth, going where adventure takes them.

The first option has several advantages. By developing one area extensively, you can create a higher degree of verisimilitude in your games. With this method, you know where everything is, what should happen next in the story, and how major NPCs react to the heroes' activities. You can also make the PCs more aware of the consequences of their actions. If they cause some unintended harm, even by accident, they can't just walk away from the repercussions. However, restricting the PCs to one small part of the wondrous canvas of Middle-earth may frustrate and upset the players. If they want to visit Rivendell or Minas Tirith but the story doesn't take them there, it diminishes their enjoyment of the game.

If you create an epic chronicle like *The Lord of the Rings* itself, you can certainly satisfy that sort of wanderlust though! As mentioned in Chapter Ten, one of the elements of epic fantasy is the quest, a journey both physical and spiritual, so there's nothing wrong with requiring the heroes in your chronicle to trek many long leagues to reach their goal—and, of course, they should have plenty of adventures along the way. The drawback is that the constant shifting of scene from place to place prevents you from ever thoroughly developing any one location or group of NPCs. By the time you start to get a real feel for a place, the PCs move on. A story-arc-based campaign minimizes this somewhat, allowing you the opportunity to develop settings a little without focusing on them until they become dull.

Assuming you do want your PCs to travel some, be sure to keep the rules for travelling (page 251) in mind. But don't let the game degenerate into hours of calculating travel times. Instead, spice up the journey with encounters and adventures. Before you begin the chronicle, come up with a list of minor adventures in which the PCs can become embroiled on their journeys. Some ideas include encounters with strange NPCs who may be dangerous but possess information or other resources the characters would want to have, natural obstacles the PCs must overcome; enemy ambushes that occur by dumb luck rather than any specific effort to find and destroy the PCs, being tricked or conned by a rogue and having to track him down to recover stolen goods, or odd ruins and artifacts the PCs can't resist investigating.

CREATING CHAPTERS

Aside from actually narrating a game session, most of your work as Narrator consists of planning and preparing chapters for your chronicle. For each chapter, you have to devise a basic story, create—and perhaps prepare a character sheet for—major NPCs the characters may encounter, set up challenges for the PCs to overcome, make notes about how the rules apply to specific situations that may crop up during the game, and perhaps even draw maps for use during battles. The more planning you do in advance, the smoother your game should go, and the more you and your players should enjoy themselves.

When planning a chapter, don't get too detailed or too rigid in your thinking. You're not trying to tell the players a story or force them to do what you want. You are attempting to create a story as a group. If you plan your chapter so that the players have to do A, B, and C in order, you're setting yourself up for trouble. The one thing you can always count on when running a game is that the players are bound to do things you don't expect.

Maybe they skip A and go straight to B. Maybe they want to do C before B. Maybe they don't even think of A, B, and C, instead concocting plans D and E to overcome the obstacles you've put in front of them. If you're not prepared or if you've planned your game too rigidly, your chapter breaks down when the players step outside of the boundaries you've defined for yourself. You have to be ready to roll with the punches and react to whatever the players do. Sometimes that means defining some details vaguely—at best—or making a few brief notes for every contingency you can think of.

THE THREE-ACT MODEL

As a guideline, you may want to consider using the three-act model many scriptwriters employ. Individual TV shows within a series are a lot like chapters in a chronicle.

In Act One, the *Introduction* or 'hook,' you involve the characters in the story you've planned by presenting them with the introductory facts. They have to know what the story's conflicts are before they can resolve them, and this act tells them what they need to know and what courses of action are open to them. This can involve something as complex as a long tale told by Elrond, or it can be as quick and easy as the characters perceiving an incoming threat. If the action begins *in media res* ('in the middle of things'), so much the better. That always gets characters involved quickly. After they learn what's going on, the characters can start to gather information, plan what they want to do, and so forth.

In Act Two, the *Confrontation*, the characters actually confront the main conflict of the story in some manner. They may do so directly (such as in a battle) or indirectly (for example, by speaking with a loremaster to learn about the threat facing them). The nature of the confrontation, like that of the conflict itself, depends on the type of story you're telling.

Ideally, the first half of Act Two involves minor pre-conflicts, the testing of theories, and the gathering of information, while the main part of the confrontation occurs in the latter half. At some point during this act—often right between those two halves—comes the 'midpoint' of the act, when the story takes an unexpected turn of some sort. Maybe the characters discover that what seemed to be a straightforward problem is actually tangled and complex, or the hunter becomes the hunted, or the PCs uncover a crucial piece of information that changes their opinion of the situation.

In Act Three, the *Resolution*, you narrate events to drive the story toward its thrilling conclusion. The PCs find out the result of their actions and react to them and whatever occurred at the midpoint. Most importantly, they should shift from being reactive to proactive. Now that they're aware of the full measure of the problem, they can go on the offensive to solve it. By this act, the PCs should feel they have a certain amount of control over the course events may take. At the very least, they should know exactly what they need to do to resolve the story.

SCENES

The building blocks of your chapter, and of each act in the Three-Act Model, are *scenes:* discrete situations involving specific characters in specific settings. For example, during the Fellowship's journey from Rivendell to Moria, some of the scenes include avoiding the spying *crebain*, the effort to cross the Redhorn Gate (and survive the snow), the fight against the werewolves, and the attempt to open the West-gate of Moria.

Scene Purpose

Every scene should have a purpose. Narrators, particularly novice Narrators, have a tendency to plan scenes around particular visuals or dramatic events. There's nothing wrong with that as such. Most scenes should have something dramatic going on, after all. But unless the scene has a role to fill in your story, it probably isn't necessary.

Knowing a scene's purpose also helps you when you're running the chapter. If you've identified the purpose of a scene as 'introduce a stealth-based conflict' (the characters have to sneak through an Orc-camp to continue their journey), you can ensure you've got everything you need to run it (a map of the camp, character sheets for major NPCs the characters may encounter, and so on) and that you've included everything the characters need to succeed (a guard looking the other way so they can sneak in successfully, an Uruk NPC who has the chance to see through their disguises, or whatever else). Furthermore, you should have an easier time keeping the players on track. If they start to go off on a tangent ('Hey, while we're here, let's kill that Nazgûl!'), you can find ways to rein them in and keep the story going—unless their tangent improves the story.

Possible purposes for scenes include:

ESTABLISH ATMOSPHERE: Also called 'colour scenes,' these scenes establish the feel you want to create. A tale told by an NPC, or a special visual you describe, can get players in just the right mood.

CREATE, INTRODUCE, OR DEVELOP CONFLICT: These scenes present the characters with a problem to solve, an enemy soldier to evade, an obstacle to overcome, or the like. Once the conflict is in play, further scenes develop it by altering the relationship between the PCs and a key NPC, resolving part of the problem, or making things worse.

PRESENT A MYSTERY OR RAISE A QUESTION: Scenes like this make characters aware of some gap in their knowledge, usually one relating to an antagonist's actions or motives. You can also use scenes like this to misdirect or redirect the characters, perhaps steering them back on the right track when they've gotten off-course.

ANSWER A QUESTION OR RESOLVE A CONFLICT: If the characters do not or cannot resolve a conflict or answer a question in the scene where you introduced it, you need a scene in which they bring the matter to a close.

PROVIDE INFORMATION: Some scenes simply provide information. They can range from an introductory scene in which an Elven-lord tells the character about a great evil they must stop, to complex investigation scenes in which the characters gather news and clues.

PC OR NPC DEVELOPMENT: Some scenes focus on one or more characters—be they PCs or NPCs—allowing you and the players to bring out facets of those characters' personalities and abilities and develop them further.

FUN, FUN, FUN: Some scenes exist purely for comedic value or to give the players a chance to enjoy themselves. They provide a light-hearted break from more serious concerns.

STORY ELEMENTS

Chapter Ten discusses the basic themes underlying epic fantasy, particularly in *The Lord of the Rings.* But stories have more elements than just theme.

THE SUPPORTING CAST

' "The Wandering Companies shall know of your journey, and those that have power for good shall be on the watch." '
— Gildor, The Fellowship of the Ring

In just about any adventure, the player characters encounter other persons: non-player characters (NPCs), characters whose part you, as Narrator, play. They can range from enemies and hindrances (the Nazgûl, Bill Ferny) to patrons and helpers (Glorfindel, Elrond, Galadriel) to allies (Prince Imrahil, Halbarad). Because they play such an important part in your *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* stories, you can improve your game by paying special attention to the NPCs you create.

First, consider the basics. What's the NPC's name? What does he look like? Where does he come from? What can he do? The more significant the NPC, the more important these little details are. No significant person should show up in your stories without an identity. Knowing who he is and what he's like helps you roleplay him properly and makes the players understand that he's important.

Next, think about the NPC's role in your story. In short, why is he there, and what does he want? Generally, NPCs fall into one of four roles: antagonists, motivators, complicators, and facilitators. Antagonists are enemies, people who for some reason want to hinder or harm the player characters. Motivators serve to get the characters involved in a story or a subplot, to spark their interest in a particular situation, or the like. Complicators make the PCs' lives more difficult in some fashion, perhaps providing minor obstacles the PCs must find a way around. Facilitators, on the other hand, help the PCs accomplish their quests. By deciding which category (or categories) into which an NPC fits, you can determine the best way to work him into the story.

Third, determine what the NPC's own goals and motivations are. These usually flow naturally from his role. For example, most antagonists' goal is to kill, harm, or turn aside the heroes. But sometimes NPCs have additional or secondary motivations that affect the way you roleplay them or how they react to the PCs' actions.

You don't have to prepare a full character sheet for each NPC your heroes encounter. Just make some notes about the crucial information for that NPC. If there's a good chance the NPC will get into a fight with your PCs, make sure you write down his combat-oriented attributes and skills. If he's intended to inspire or motivate the PCs, you may only want to note his Bearing or Persuade instead. Only major NPCs—particularly those whom you intend to use again and again—need full character write-ups. Character sheets are mostly for PCs, for whom you want to know lots of details.

RULES OF TOLKIENESQUE DRAMA

As Narrator, you want your stories to have the Tolkien feel: the atmosphere, pacing, and flavour that you find and love in Tolkien's books. By keeping these 'rules of Tolkien drama' in mind while you plan and narrate chapters, you can do your best to ensure that you get the flavour of your chronicle right.

In addition to the specific suggestions below, two general guidelines always apply to your work as Narrator. First, tailor your stories to the types of character actions you envision occurring in Tolkien's works. Can you see the characters in *The Lord of the Rings* torturing prisoners for information, spending hours slaughtering every single Orc in some caves beneath the Misty Mountains, or stealing horses from the Beornings? Of course not. Those are unheroic things to do. So don't put your player characters in a position in which they have to do them.

Second, provide alternatives to undesirable behaviour. If you set up a story where the only way the PCs can obtain the information they need is to torture a prisoner, it's hard to blame the players for deciding to do that. Similarly, if the only viable option for a magician character is to cast one attack spell after another, you can't fault him for that—even though it's very un-Tolkienesque—because you didn't give him a choice. You must provide alternatives and options that allow the PCs to maintain their heroic attitudes and act in heroic, Tolkien-appropriate ways. *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* is not a game of internal struggle and moral conflict, so don't present the PCs with situations in which they have to agonize over the moral implications of their actions. The proper, heroic, thing to do should be readily apparent, and doing it should get the characters what they want—even if they don't realize it right away.

TOLKIENESQUE PACING

In Tolkien's works, as in any good drama, the story flows along at just the right pace: not too fast, but not too slow either. The action scenes, in particular, have excellent pacing, conveying the right sense of urgency and danger without descending into mind-numbing detail.

You have to learn to achieve this same pace in your games. In large part, this is an art, something you learn from experience. After you narrate some chapters, you should feel your way to the proper pace for your group of players, but there are a few tips and tricks that can help you.

Avoid Extended Planning

Don't let the players get bogged down in discussion and planning. There's nothing wrong with spending a few minutes, even an hour, debating the right course of action for an adventure, battle, or scene. As long as everyone's enjoying the roleplaying and the planning progresses, allow it to continue. But once the players figure out the best way to approach the problem, or come up with the conclusive solution to the mystery, or start to argue about petty details, stop them. That's not constructive or conducive to good storytelling. Find a way to let them know their plan is good enough already or that they've found the right answer, and then continue with the game.

Combat Pacing

Find ways to hasten combat. In Tolkien's novels, combat and battles are exciting, fast-paced scenes. Unfortunately, in roleplaying games, combat scenes take the longest, since they involve lots of dice rolling. But there are ways you can speed up the pace of game combat. Note that each of these rules is entirely optional.

First, you don't need full game statistics or a complete character sheet for every NPC involved in a battle. All you need are some notes on the combat-related aspects of the character: his Strength and Nimbleness, Armed Combat and Ranged Combat skills, and things like that. If the NPC is just one of many similar NPCs, such as a member of horde of Orcs, you can note these details on a single sheet of paper in a chart for easy reference. Then you just cross each of the similar NPCs off as he dies or flees the battle.

Second, for minor NPCs don't worry about keeping track of wound points and Wound Levels. NPCs like that are cannon fodder. They're not intended to give the PCs serious competition in a one-on-one combat, but to demonstrate how mighty the hero is by having him slay a lot of them, just like Boromir slew 20 Orcs before he died, or Legolas and Gimli each slew more than 40 at Helm's Deep. Instead, label them one-, two-, or three-success opponents, depending on how tough you want them to be. A one-success opponent dies after he's hit with a complete success or better. A two-success opponent dies after two complete success hits, or one superior or extraordinary success hit. A three-success opponent can withstand three complete success hits, one superior success hit and one complete success hit, or one extraordinary success hit—or any better combination—before dying. A marginal success is assumed to hit a foe but not hard enough to really hurt him.

WEAPONS, VIOLENCE, INJURIES, AND HEALING

The natural tendency for most players is to arm and equip their characters to the teeth. They carry multiple weapons, wear the heaviest armour they can get away with, and fill their packs with any little thing they think they might possibly ever need.

In contrast, let's look at the Fellowship of the Ring. Aragorn, who entered the story bearing as his weapon only a *broken* blade, carries his longsword. Boromir has his longsword as well, and a shield. Gimli carries an axe, Legolas a bow and a long knife, Gandalf his enchanted blade Glamdring, and the Hobbits their daggers. Only Gimli and Frodo wear any armour at all. In short, none of them remotely qualifies as heavily armed. If you want the PCs in your group to feel like true Tolkienesque characters, they should do the same. Encourage this sort of behaviour by emphasizing the encumbrance rules on page 216 (perhaps you can even increase the penalties for carrying heavy loads), by awarding extra experience points to lightly armed characters, and by encouraging the use of Courage, edges like Armour of Heroes, and similar game elements.

Similarly, how game characters use their weapons often differs from the way the characters in the novels do. Game characters often seem intent on fighting any NPC who rears his ugly head, no matter what the odds or how inappropriate combat is. But the members of the Fellowship—and Tolkien's other characters—fight only when they have to. They don't stand in the Chamber of Mazarbul and swing their swords until all the Orcs or they are dead. They clash with them quickly to buy some time, then run for it. They don't start hacking the Riders of Rohan apart when the first encounter with Éomer turns a little tense. You need to encourage the same restraint and wisdom on the part of your players by (a) talking with them in advance to make sure they understand this aspect of the game and (b) rewarding appropriate behaviour and roleplaying with extra experience points. More importantly, you should design scenarios that offer something for the characters to do other than draw their swords and fight. Give them a way out: a way to run from a foe who's obviously too tough for them right now, a means to negotiate a truce rather than descend into bloodshed, or a common enemy to bring unfriendly peoples together.

The absence of armour and the relative lack of emphasis on extended combat sequences (outside of major battles) plays into another element of Tolkien's work: the minimization of injuries to major characters. Think about the Fellowship for a moment. During all their adventures, most of them never suffer a major wound. The exceptions are Frodo (who's stabbed with a Morgul-knife and stung by Shelob), Gandalf (who fights the Balrog to the death), and Boromir (who dies a heroic death from Orc-arrows), but those injuries have a specific plot purpose. They weren't inflicted at random. Aragorn, Gimli, Legolas, Merry, Pippin, and Sam never get hurt. They suffer a scratch here and there but never any injury sufficient to hinder them. That's why they don't have to wear 50 pounds of armour each. They don't need it.

Of course, games differ from books. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Professor Tolkien can have his characters go without armour because he controls them and the events of the story and can ensure that they don't get hurt. In your game, you exert primary control over the flow of the story, but not complete control, and you have almost no control over the protagonists (the PCs). But you can

still use this element of Tolkienesque drama in your games if you work at it. As an optional rule, except when the PCs face a major foe—one important enough for you to give him a name and partial character sheet—don't injure them. Roll the dice so you look like you're attacking them, but always have the attacker miss. If you must inflict an injury, do only a few points of damage and don't let characters sink below the Dazed Wound Level. Of course, don't let the PCs come to think they're invulnerable. If they do something stupid, like jumping into the midst of 27 Orcs, they should get hurt, and badly. But provided the heroes play with intelligence and skill, let them go through the game suffering few, if any, major wounds. Otherwise, they are fully justified in wanting to wear that 50 pounds of armour.

The other reason you should avoid inflicting major wounds on PCs frequently is that there's relatively little way to heal them. Unlike most fantasy roleplaying games in which a spell or two can instantly cure almost any wound, in *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* all the players have to fall back on is the Healing skill, perhaps enhanced by the *Healing-spell*) Not even the best Healing roll can instantly cure a major wound or eliminate the penalties associated with it. If you reduce a character to Wounded or Incapacitated, he's going to suffer from the associated test result penalties for a long time, and that's not much fun for the player. So, as much as reasonably possible, stick to scratches and bruises instead of inflicting deep wounds.

Magic

As Chapter Seven discusses in detail, magic in Tolkien's works has its own special feel, a flavour and atmosphere that results from its rare, subtle, and seemingly low-powered nature. There are very few spellcasters walking around in Middle-earth—at least compared to the numbers in many other fantasy roleplaying games—and they don't have access to powerful attack spells or the like. Instead, many of their spells are utilitarian. They can create light, start fires, open and lock doors, enhance some character abilities, and so forth.

If you put spellcasters in situations in which all they can do is cast one attack spell after another, that's what they are likely to do—and your game won't seem Tolkienesque at all. Remember, Gandalf didn't walk through Moria blasting Orcs with lightning at every turn, or unleash his powers to wither the army of Mordor before the gates of Minas Tirith. Instead, he concentrated on aiding his companions, delaying the enemy, and withstanding foes no one else on the battlefield could hinder. You should structure your chapters to provide similar opportunities to spellcasters. Set up situations in which the spellcaster's ability to kindle fire, bring light to dark places, or summon beasts for use as messengers is crucial to the story. That way the player feels his character is just as important to the group's success as every other hero, even if he isn't able to slay as many Orcs.

Types of Chronicles

' "This is the hour of the Shire-folk, when they arise from their quiet fields to shake the towers and counsels of the Great." '
— Elrond, The Fellowship of the Ring

Given the size and history of Middle-earth, many possibilities for where and when to set your chronicle exist. The text below describes several of the most common choices, but they're not the only ones. If you have an idea you like better, or your players suggest a time or setting they would enjoy more, feel free to try that instead.

Before the War

Perhaps the most interesting timeframe in which to set your chronicle is TA 2942–3018, the 76-year period between Bilbo's finding of the One Ring and Frodo's setting out on the Quest of Mount Doom. Many of Decipher's *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* products are set during this era.

The time before the War of the Ring offers many roleplaying and adventuring possibilities. As the opening quote for this chapter notes, this is a time when evil is rising once again in the world. Sauron has returned to Mordor and declared himself, and he is rebuilding the Dark Tower once again. Orcs and Trolls are multiplying and faring abroad, and many other dark and shadowy things are awakening in the forgotten corners of Middle-earth. The player characters have the opportunity to stem some of these evils now, lest they become great and powerful, ready tools to Sauron's fell hand. In that sense, your chronicle may bear some similarities to the Quest of Erebor, which Gandalf encouraged in part to keep Smaug from becoming a factor in the War of the Ring.

ADVENTURE POSSIBILITIES

Purists may argue that, since the histories described in *The Lord of the Rings* mention no great adventures during that time, none could have occurred. But just because none of the Wise heard about other quests or heroic deeds does not mean they did not occur. Many bold and noble adventures may have taken place without any record of them being made—and perhaps your player characters are the heroes who took part in them.

The many possible adventures or quests a group of player characters could undertake include:

ANGMAR: The terrible realm of the Witch-king, far away at the northern reach of the Misty Mountains, fell long ago. But its evil lingers still, and many ruins from the times when it warred against or ruled over the remnants of Arnor exist in the lands of northern Eriador. Who knows what horrors the Lord of the Nazgûl may have left behind, that now issue forth to trouble the folk who still live in that part of Middle-earth—and what treasures may await victorious adventurers who rise to the challenge? Likewise, many ruins from the wars with Angmar exist still amid the hills and glens and may hold bandits, forgotten treasures, or other opportunities for adventure.

EVILS OF THE NORTH: Other evils, some descended from Angmar but others not, haunt the North as well. As Aragorn notes, '"Strider," I am to one fat man who lives within a day's march of foes that would freeze his heart or lay his little town in ruin if he were not guarded ceaselessly.' (*The Fellowship of the Ring*) From the wights of the Barrow-downs, to Old Man Willow and the evil spirits haunting the Old Forest, to whatever may lurk in the forgotten cities of Fornost Erain and Annúminas, many evils exist for heroes to oppose and defeat.

THE GREY MOUNTAINS: This northern range remains the haunt of dragons, drakes, and perhaps beasts yet fouler and more fell. Dwarf-mansions long abandoned, the lairs of wyrms, and strange tribes of Men are there, just waiting for adventurers to discover them.

MINHIRIATH, ENEDWAITH, AND DUNLAND: These sparsely-settled regions of Eriador could contain many opportunities to oppose evil. Dunland, inhabited by wary and often wicked Dunlendings, definitely poses a danger for most adventurers.

A LATE THIRD AGE TIMELINE

To help you keep the events of this period straight, here's a timeline of significant occurrences:

DATE	EVENTS
2941	Bilbo finds the Ring; Necromancer driven from Dol Guldur; death of Smaug; Battle of the Five Armies; Kingdom Under the Mountain restored.
2944	Bard rebuilds Dale and becomes its king.
2948	Théoden of Rohan born.
2949	Gandalf and Balin visit Bilbo in the Shire.
2951	Sauron declares himself openly, begins rebuilding the Barad-dûr, and sends three Nazgûl to occupy Dol Guldur; Aragorn learns his true name and lineage, and meets Arwen.
2953	The last meeting of the White Council, where Saruman asserts the One Ring has been lost in the Sea forever; Saruman begins fortifying Isengard and spying on Gandalf, Bree, and the Shire.
2954	Orodruin bursts into flame; the remnants of the people of Ithilien flee that land.
2956	Aragorn meets Gandalf.
2957	Starting now, and ending in 2980, Aragorn begins his period of wandering, adventure, and training, serving in disguise under Ecthelion II of Gondor and King Thengel of Rohan.
2977	Bain, son of Bard, becomes King of Dale.
2980	Gollum first encounters Shelob.
2984	Denethor II becomes Ruling Steward.
2989	Balin and his followers enter Moria.
2994	Balin slain, his colony in Moria destroyed.
3001	Bilbo gives the Ring to Frodo and leaves the Shire.
3007	Brand, son of Bain, becomes King of Dale.
3009	Gandalf and Aragorn begin their hunt for Gollum, which continues periodically until Aragorn captures him in 3017.
3018	Frodo leaves Shire.
3019	War of the Ring.

turing beneath its boughs are sure to find adventure.

ORCS: Though the Battle of the Five Armies severely depleted their numbers, the Orcs are multiplying again in the mountains and venturing out to raid, pillage, and slay. From their strongholds at Gundabad and Mount Gram and their warrens beneath the Misty Mountains, they are causing trouble throughout the Wilds, a threat and a challenge no true hero could ignore.

OTHER EVILS: 'There are many evil and unfriendly things in the world that have little love for those that go on two legs, and yet are not in league with Sauron, but have purposes of their own. Some have been in this world longer than he.' (Aragorn, *The Fellowship of the Ring*) Many other fell beasts, monsters, and lingering evils afflict Middle-earth, providing the Narrator with a wealth of adventure creation possibilities.

PERILS TO AVOID

The advantages of setting your chronicle during this period are many, but there are also some potential drawbacks you should be aware of. Knowing of them in advance, you can plan ahead and so avoid them or minimize their impact on your game.

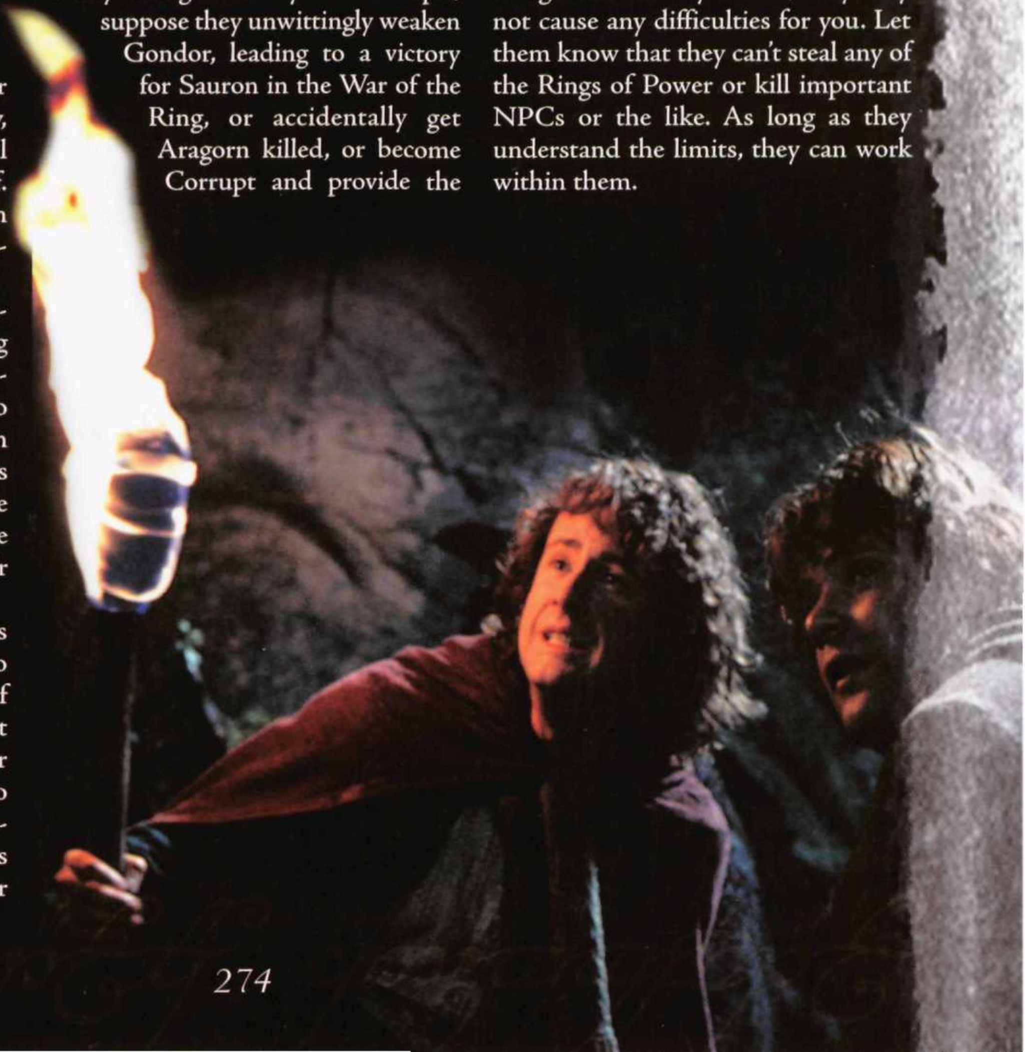
The main difficulty with the pre-War of the Ring period is that, having read Tolkien's saga, you and your players already know what is about to happen. The players know when Frodo gets the Ring, what Gollum is up to at various times, and when the War starts and how it ends. For some gamers, this significantly hinders their ability to enjoy the game.

What you have to decide, as Narrator, is whether you intend to stick with the established course of events or are willing to change what occurs in the epic. Refusing to alter the events of the novel allows you to use the canonical history as a touchstone for your game. The players know this history and find it familiar and comforting, which may help them roleplay better. However, it means that you, as Narrator, have to arrange the events of the chronicle to ensure that established events take place as described. If the players do something that could interfere with the history that is to come—if, for example, they take the Ring from Frodo 'because we can guard it better'—you have to either start over or deliberately orchestrate events to bring things back on track. This is often hard to do, and it usually requires you to be heavy handed, which players dislike.

A willingness to alter the events of *The Lord of the Rings* doesn't necessarily solve your problems either. Changing the established events frees you and your players to do whatever you want. The shackles of 'following canon' fall away. But you lose the familiarity developed from reading Tolkien's books. Other problems may develop if the players do something that significantly changes history. For example, suppose they unwittingly weaken Gondor, leading to a victory for Sauron in the War of the Ring, or accidentally get Aragorn killed, or become Corrupt and provide the Dark Lord with several powerful new servants? You may have to work hard to keep the whole chronicle from collapsing.

In the end, each Narrator needs to find a balance between slavishly adhering to the events of the book and maintaining player character freedom. Some events you can change without any problem: dates of birth or coronation, for example, or even the identity of certain people, like the King of Dale. Other changes, such as killing significant NPCs, you would need to prevent somehow. Use your best judgment, keeping in mind that your goal as Narrator is to help everyone have fun, and things should turn out fine.

Talking to your players about these concerns may help you to resolve problems or prevent them from occurring in the first place. For example, if the players understand that they can change unimportant things but not key events, they may not cause any difficulties for you. Let them know that they can't steal any of the Rings of Power or kill important NPCs or the like. As long as they understand the limits, they can work within them.



OTHER CHRONICLE POSSIBILITIES

The late Third Age isn't the only fine time for an exciting chronicle.

THE WAR OF THE RING

If you're willing to change the events of *The Lord of the Rings* (at least a little), you can set your chronicle during the War of the Ring instead of before it. In this case, the PCs probably take on the roles of the primary heroes in the saga of Middle-earth. Instead of Gandalf, Aragorn, and Frodo questing to save the world, your characters do it. They may choose to follow basically the same course of action as the heroes in the book, or they can try a completely different method. It's all up to them!

Alternately, you can create a chronicle that takes place behind the scenes of the book. In this case, the PCs' adventures occur at the same time—and on occasion even in the same places—as the events described in the book, but they involve activities that weren't on centre stage in Tolkien's saga. For example, they could participate in the Battle of Dale, hold the line during the Battle of the Pelennor Fields in a part of the field far away from Aragorn and Éomer, help Elfhelm and his forces drive the Orcs and Easterlings from Anórien, assist Aragorn with the defeat of the Corsairs of Umbar, join Galadriel and Celeborn in the fight against the forces of Dol Guldur, or the like. If you read *The Lord of the Rings* carefully, you can find many other opportunities for these sorts of chapters.

If you need to, you can even make up a few events specifically for your own campaign. Maybe the PCs have to lead a small force of soldiers to waylay a much larger force of Orcs and Haradrim approaching Minas Tirith from the south, so that the Captains of the West can reach the Morannon unhindered. Or perhaps some powerful Dunlending clans regroup after the loss at Helm's Deep and decide to attack Rohan while the Riders are fighting on the Pelennor Fields, and the PCs have to find a way to stop them. The possibilities are as broad and varied as Middle-earth itself.

THE FOURTH AGE

'[T]he hatreds and evils that [Sauron] bred had not died, and the King of the West had many enemies to subdue before the White Tree could grow in peace.'
— The Return of the King

The early Fourth Age, during King Elessar's reign, offers many intriguing adventure opportunities. Though it may seem like the grandest adventure of all has already taken place, there's still lots to do.

First, as the quote above tells you, the fact of Sauron's destruction doesn't sweep away the effect of the thousands of years he spent breeding corruption and hatred. Many Easterling and Southron tribes remain implacable enemies of Gondor, forcing the King to fight many battles against them before he can achieve full peace. Your PCs may become the central heroes in those wars.

There's also the possibility that someone could try to take Sauron's place. Your best candidates for this are the two of the Five Wizards who disappeared into the East and were never heard from again. Though they may have gone there to help the Easterlings resist Sauron's wiles, per-

PLAYING THE FELLOWSHIP

If you've played *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Adventure Game*, you know about the concept of playing the heroes of the book themselves. You can keep doing that, if you prefer. *The Fellowship of the Ring Sourcebook*, available where this book was purchased, contains full character sheets for Gandalf, Gimli, Sam, and all the other members of the Fellowship of the Ring. You can let the players use them as PCs if you want.

The advantage to playing the members of the Fellowship is that the players already know what they're like. From reading the books or seeing the films, they know how Gandalf thinks, how Aragorn acts, what Boromir's motivations are, and so forth. The drawback is that this deprives the players of the chance to exercise their own creativity with regards to coming up with a character of their own. You could balance this by letting the players adopt the familiar Fellowship roles for a few games, then having the players switch to their own characters when they have learned the rules.

The character sheets in *The Fellowship of the Ring Sourcebook* are a lot more detailed than the ones in the *Adventure Game*. Don't let that confuse or concern you. You don't have to use all the abilities and skills on the character sheets if you don't want to. If you prefer, you can start out slowly, using only some of the characters' abilities—the ones that match the abilities on the *Adventure Game* character sheets. As you become familiar with the full *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* rules, you can add more and more abilities until the players are each playing a complete character.

haps they eventually fell prey to greed and the hunger for power, just as Saruman did. As mighty spellcasters, they could easily take control of Sauron's armies and try to turn them against a West weakened by war. If this idea is not to your taste, you could have the Mouth of Sauron survive the fall of Barad-dûr, or you could create a powerful Easterling sorcerer, Orc-chieftain, or Southron prince to serve as the main enemy in your chronicle.

Many other lingering evils exist in Middle-earth, and you can construct a chronicle around the PCs' efforts to eradicate them. Even after the fall of Dol Guldur, Mirkwood remains dark and dangerous. The Orc-strongholds of Gundabad and Mount Gram have not yet been overthrown, and evil may still lurk in the shadows of forgotten Angmar or around the ruins of Fornost Erain. Even without the Balrog, the Orcs and Trolls of Moria are strong. The Dwarves cannot resettle their ancient mansion until all their foes have been slain or driven out. It is certainly going to take a lot of hard work and perilous adventures before the characters can truly say that Middle-earth is free from the Shadow.

HISTORICAL CHRONICLES

If the late Third Age or early Fourth Age don't appeal to you, try an earlier era. A chronicle set in the early Third Age—perhaps during the troublesome times when the remnants of Arnor fought among themselves and the Witch-king threatened the North—offers a lot of adventure possibilities that pose little or no threat to the established course of events in the late Third Age. Or maybe your PCs can help Gondor stave off the threats of the Wainriders or the Balchoth.

But you can go even further back if you want. During the Second Age, both the War of the Elves and Sauron and the War of the Last Alliance offers PCs the chance to fight directly against the Dark Lord himself. Imagine going into battle alongside Gil-galad and Elendil, or helping Elrond found Imladris, or being the Elves charged with hiding the lesser Rings of Power from Sauron. Since Tolkien provided few details about this era, you have a largely blank canvas on which to create your own stories.

You could even journey back to the First Age, when the Elves fought against Morgoth, the Great Enemy, to recover the Silmarils. Your players can't play Hobbit characters in this era, and most Mannish characters are Dúnedain—or, more accurately, the forefathers of the Dúnedain, but that's the proper racial package to use. On the other hand, in that earlier time, Elves, Dwarves, and Men were all more powerful than they are now. You should probably start every character with at least five to 10 advancements, if not more, and you may wish to consider providing other bonuses as well: increases to attributes, extra spell picks, and so on.

RACIAL CHRONICLES

If your players are willing, you can try to craft a chronicle around a single race. Perhaps all the PCs have to be Dwarves, and the chronicle portrays the War of the Dwarves and Orcs. Or maybe they're all Elves, struggling to keep the Shadow from engulfing Mirkwood. You could even create an

all-Ranger campaign, with the PCs as experienced men who help Aragorn keep the dangers of the North at bay. The possibilities are limited only by your imagination and your players' willingness to restrict their own character ideas.

EXPERIENCE

' "Perilous to us are the devices of an art deeper than we possess ourselves." '
— Gandalf, The Two Towers

Characters in *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*, like most character's in Professor Tolkien's epic, are not static. As they experience things through their adventures, they learn, grow, and become more capable and powerful. For example, Merry, Pippin, and Sam all started the Quest of Mount Doom with little to contribute compared to Aragorn, Boromir, or Gandalf. But by the end of the story, Merry and Pippin had achieved renown as warriors, and Sam was famed for helping Frodo complete the quest. In game terms, character growth and development is reflected by awarding *experience points*.

As a character grows more experienced, he has the opportunity to undergo advancements and increase his levels in his skills, reactions, attributes, and other abilities. By using advancement picks, players reveal how they feel recent game events have affected their characters' ongoing development. By building and enhancing their characters' innate characteristics and attributes, players adapt their characters over time, simulating the personal development that results from their characters' exploits.

ACQUIRING EXPERIENCE

Whenever characters complete an adventure, quest, or chapter, they earn experience points. The amount of points they earn for a given adventure depends on the Narrator, who determines how many to award based on the difficulty of the adventure and other factors. Every Narrator has her own preferences about how many experience points to award. Some give out few experience points, so they can keep the characters' growth slow and steady. Others prefer to be more generous.

Depending on the Narrator's individual style, characters may receive experience in one of two ways: after each individual test, or after each chapter. If your group uses the former method, players will have a bit more record-keeping to worry about during play. If your group employs the latter method, players will have to keep running experience totals throughout the chapter and tally everything at the end.

Regardless of which method is used, the rules for awarding experience remain consistent from one game to the next. Characters earn experience by accomplishing the goals of a chapter or scene, based on how well they accomplished those goals and how well they roleplayed their characters. Although numerous factors can alter or modify experience awards, the basic award triggers remain constant. Refer to the Experience Awards Table for base award numbers.

EXPERIENCE FROM SUCCESSFUL TESTS

The most common way to gain ongoing experience during a chapter is through the completion of story-related tests. When a character succeeds at a particular test during the game, he gains experience equal to the test TN. His companions gain half this amount of experience.

In most games, experience gained by successfully completing tests should only come from tests that have relevance or bearing on the story or its objectives. For example, a noble shouldn't receive experience for every petty lordling he sways through his oratory. But he should receive experience for successfully convincing a hostile king's aide to let him "peek" at the king's secret diaries, especially since clues to a major story objective reside within these same documents.

Obviously, determining applicable tests becomes something of a judgment call. Narrators need to be fair to their players, while at the same time servicing the needs of the story. Try to spread important tests across the skill set of the entire group. If the wizard is always making all of the important story-related tests, the other players will quickly become disillusioned. To narrate a great game episode, you need to ensure that everyone is participating. Players will forgive a great deal as long as they feel they have a personal stake in the outcome of the story.

Finally, some Narrators will ask their players to keep a general record of the types of tests their characters succeeded at during the episode. While this isn't critical, such records often come in handy when trying to justify specific advancement picks. Also, some Narrators impose a limit of one test of each type per scene. Thus, if a character succeeds at three critical Smithcraft tests in a single scene, the character will only receive experience for one of them (normally the test with the highest TN).

TABLE 11.1: ADVANCEMENT PICKS

PICKS	EFFECT/IMPROVEMENT
1	ORDER SKILL: +1 rank with any order skill.
1	RACIAL SKILL: +1 rank with any racial skill.
1	SPECIALTY: One new specialty for any skill the character possesses.
2	EDGE: Gain a new edge, or improve an edge the character already possesses.
2	NON-ORDER SKILL: +1 rank with any non-order skill.
2	RENOWN: +1 Renown (adds to base Renown).
2	REACTION (FAVOURED): +1 to a character's favoured reaction.
3	REACTION (NON-FAVOURED): +1 to any reaction the character does not favour.
3	ORDER ABILITY: Gain a new order special ability, or improve an ability the character already possesses.
3	COURAGE: +1 Courage.
4	ATTRIBUTE (FAVOURED): +1 to one of the character's favoured attributes (adds to base attribute).
5	ATTRIBUTE (NON-FAVOURED): +1 to one of the character's non-favoured attributes (adds to base attribute)
5	HEALTH: +1 Health
5	New Order: Join a new basic or elite order

FULFILLING STORY OBJECTIVES

Characters also gain experience by fulfilling the primary and secondary objectives of the story, as well as individual scene goals along the way. These may involve solving riddles, interacting with specific supporting cast characters, or thwarting the nefarious plans of an enemy or rival.

The Primary Objective

This chapter includes guidelines for creating epic adventures and chronicles set in Middle-earth. When designing individual chapters, the Narrator normally gives each chapter a primary goal—the main plot—and a secondary goal—the subplot—for the characters to overcome.

The character's should receive 1,000 experience points, as a group, for defeating or overcoming a chapter's primary objective. Note that the experience award is divided among the participants; each character doesn't receive 1,000 experience.

In certain special cases, however, it may be appropriate to weight the experience awards more heavily in favor of one or more characters. While this practice shouldn't occur too often, the Narrator can occasionally use it to reward truly exceptional play—a character who makes an unusual sacrifice, a character who saves the lives of the entire group, or a character who singlehandedly solves most of a chapter's objectives.

The Secondary Objective

The Narrator should award 500 experience to the characters for overcoming a chapter's secondary objective (enough for a single character to gain half an advancement). As with the primary objective, this experience is usually divided equally among the participating characters. Once again, it might be appropriate to weight the experience award. The Narrator should use his own judgment based upon the actions of the individual characters during the course of the chapter.

Scene goals

Every game chapter in *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* is composed of a collection of scenes. Scenes become the foundation of a well-designed chapter, just as they do in Tolkien's novels. In addition, each scene normally serves a discrete purpose. These purposes can be as diverse as establishing atmosphere, creating or resolving conflict, raising or solving mysteries or questions, or providing critical information. When the characters successfully accomplish a scene's purpose, award them 100 experience. Weight the awards if you feel the situation warrants it. For more information on scenes and their design, refer to page 268.

EXCEPTIONAL ROLEPLAYING

Depending on the Narrator's personal style and the type of game she runs, good roleplaying may be as important as the completion of story objectives. During the course of a *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* chapter, characters are constantly interacting with the setting and its inhabitants. If your particular version of *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game* doesn't really stress roleplaying, the Narrator doesn't have to give out additional experience for performing well. However, players who truly embrace their characters and the setting, who "get into character" and try to react to circumstances as their character would, probably deserve a little something extra in the experience department. On the other hand, players who force their characters to go against type or do things their charac-

Table 11.2: Experience Awards

Condition	Experience Award
Successful completion of test related to story objectives	TN of test (companions gain half this amount)
Successful completion of episode's primary objective	1,000 (to divide among the characters)
Successful completion of episode's secondary objective	500 (to divide among the characters)
Successful completion of scene purpose	100 (to divide among the characters)
Character was roleplayed exceptionally well	special (per character)

ters would never do, probably don't deserve any experience bonuses for roleplaying.

Noteworthy Accomplishments

Sometimes characters will do something so extraordinary, or solve a problem in such a clever fashion, that their actions scream for some type of extra award. In this case, give them something extra for their originality. Bonus awards should rarely exceed 100 points or so, but if you feel they are warranted, by all means give them out to reward an exceptional performance. This type of award may also be appropriate for characters who overcome overwhelming odds or face unusually extreme hazards.

Spending Experience: Advancements

When a character accumulates 1,000 experience points, the player may spend the experience to allow his character to undergo an advancement. An advancement represents how the character has grown, learned, and improved during the course of his adventures. When a character undergoes an advancement, he gets to make five picks on the Advancement Table.

With your picks, you can improve your character's attributes and reactions, have him learn new skills or improve the ones he already knows, have him acquire new edges or order abilities or improve the ones he already has, and so forth. If appropriate, the Narrator may allow you to take a flaw for your character when he advances, entitling you to make a sixth pick from the table.

Some things require only one pick. Others require multiple picks. For example, improving an order skill costs only one pick per +1, whereas acquiring an additional point of Courage costs three picks.

Example: *Christian's character, Menelcar, earns 1,000 experience points and so undergoes an advancement as a warrior and gets to make five picks from the Advancement Picks Table. Because Menelcar has spent a lot of time in battle recently, Christian decides that it would be appropriate for him to acquire the Battle-Hardened order ability. That takes three of his five picks. Since Menelcar's prowess as a warrior has brought him to the attention of many lords and nobles in Gondor, Christian*

TABLE 11.3: SAMPLE RENOWN TRIGGERS

TRIGGER	AWARD
Saving the life of an important NPC	NPC's Renown/5 (round down)
Saving the life of an important NPC during a routine encounter or event (diplomatic, military, etc.)	+1
Saving the life of an important NPC during a publicized encounter or event (diplomatic, military, etc.)	+2
Saving the life of an important NPC during a highly publicized encounter or event (diplomatic, military, etc.)	+3-5 or more
Thwarting the plans of an enemy servant, spy, or agent	Servant's Renown/5 (round down)
Thwarting the plans of an enemy servant, spy, or agent during a routine encounter or in enemy territory	+1
Thwarting the plans of an enemy servant, spy, or agent during a dangerous mission or in friendly territory	+2
Thwarting the plans of an enemy servant, spy, or agent during a critical mission or in close proximity to friendly power brokers (the Steward of Gondor, for example)	+3-5 or more
Showing uncommon bravery in the midst of battle with a renowned commander or in the face of great adversity	commander's Renown/5 (round down)
Showing uncommon bravery in the midst of an important battle against the forces of the Shadow	+1
Showing uncommon bravery in the midst of a critical battle against the forces of the Shadow	+2
Showing uncommon bravery in the midst of a world-shaping battle against the forces of the Shadow	+3-5 or more
Successfully completing an intricate and publicized negotiation or treaty with a renowned diplomat or noble	diplomat's Renown/5 (round down)
Successfully completing a major public negotiation or treaty	+1
Successfully completing an extremely critical or intricate public negotiation or treaty	+2
Successfully completing a public negotiation or treaty of world-spanning scope or importance	+3-5 or more
Making an arcane or exploratory discovery of importance	+1
Making an arcane or exploratory discovery of major or critical importance	+2
Making an arcane or exploratory discovery of world-spanning importance	+3-5 or more
Discovering a new or innovative use for existing magic, lore, or technology	+1-3 or more

decides to spend his last two picks to increase Menelcar's Renown by +1.

John's character Grór, Menelcar's boon companion, has also earned 1,000 experience points and advanced. He had some problems attacking a Troll in the last adventure, so he spends two picks to increase his Armed Combat: Axes (Battle Axe) skill by +2. John decides to spend the other three picks on +1 Courage, raising Grór's Courage to 4, so Grór can have an extra advantage if he runs into another troublesome foe.

Although players can theoretically purchase anything on the Advancement Picks Table for their characters, it's the Narrator's job to make sure that their picks work within the context of the chapter or chronicle. Characters should purchase new skills, traits, abilities, and Renown to reflect events and accomplishments that occur during the game. If a character has never spent any time in Far Harad and has not researched the habits or culture of its people, it would seem a bit strange for him to spend his advancement picks on esoteric Southron dialects or cultural skills. On the other hand, if the character crafted several masterwork pieces over the course of an extended chapter, he may decide to spend several picks on Smithcraft.

Generally, if a player wants to buy a new skill, specialty, or professional ability for his character, the Narrator may ask him to justify the acquisition through game play. A character doesn't simply learn a new skill overnight. Normally, they are exposed to a skill in some narrative manner, and then spend some time training and studying, often using an instructor of some sort. As long as the player justifies his character's training appropriately, most Narrators will allow him to use his advancement picks to acquire the skills he chooses. In certain special cases, the Narrator may impose short training periods; he may allow a character to spend his picks, but force him to wait several weeks of game time until the character actually enjoys the benefits of the new skill.

Other advancement possibilities—attributes, edges, Renown, Courage—often represent more abstract development on the part of a character. At the Narrator's discretion, characters may be required to undergo periods of training to improve certain abilities (especially attributes or Health). The Narrator may also require justification for Renown or Courage purchases, since these often reflect in-game accomplishments or heroics. After all, building an impressive legend or cult of personality around their favorite character is all part of the fun for your players.

EXPERIENCED CHARACTERS

As noted on page 79, some characters—like Merry and Pippin—start the game with no order—or with only a partial set of beginning order skills—to reflect their inexperience. You can do the opposite as well: start characters off as *more* experienced than the typical character. For example, in *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf, Aragorn, Boromir, Gimli, and Legolas all enter the adventure not as starting characters, but as characters with a significant number of advancements.

If you want some of your players to start the game with experienced characters, all you have to do is award them one or more advancements before the game begins. After they make their racial and order picks, let them make the appropriate number of picks from the Advancement Picks Table. Make sure the players note how many advancements their characters have already taken on their character sheets. That helps you keep track of each character's relative level of power and competence.

RENOWN AWARDS

Characters gain Renown during play through exceptional or ignoble actions called triggers. As a broad general rule, if an action or accomplishment draws unusual notice or acclaim, the character performing the action gains Renown of some type. Killing a notorious Corsair along the southern coast of Gondor or negotiating an important treaty among a group of warring Easterling factions would both garner a character varying levels of Renown.

Narrators should normally limit Renown awards to a point or two at a time. Groundbreaking accomplishments or world-spanning events could conceivably earn a character five, ten, or even a dozen points of Renown. Alternately, since Renown can be purchased using advancement picks, you may require your players to use their picks to buy Renown after their actions or accomplishments during an episode warrant the purchase.

The Sample Renown Triggers Table provides a list of sample Renown triggers and their suggested Renown awards. Depending on the setting and the nature of your chronicle, almost any action could theoretically generate Renown for a character. Don't consider this list the only authority on Renown awards; rather, use it as a guide to apply to your own chronicle.

Chapter Twelve

THE FEAR AND THE SHADOW

> *'There was an eye in the Dark Tower that did not sleep. He knew that it had become aware of his gaze. A fierce eager will was there.'*
>
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring.*

Characters cannot become heroes without a chance for heroism. In Middle-earth, any opportunity to prove one's self a hero almost certainly involves opposing the Shadow or fighting the many creatures that serve it or that it has bred. This chapter details some, but by no means all, of these fell beasts and men. Narrators should use the examples given here as guidelines for the creation of their own monsters and enemies.

SERVANTS OF SHADOW

SAURON, THE DARK LORD

> *' "The Enemy still lacks one thing to give him strength and knowledge to beat down all resistance, break the last defences, and cover all the lands in a second darkness. He lacks the One Ring." '*
>
> *— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring*

Known to the world as the Dark Lord, the Lord of Mordor, the Lidless Eye, the Enemy, or the Lord of Barad-dûr, Sauron has been the greatest threat to the peace and safety of the Free Peoples during the Second and Third Ages. In one way or another, he lies at the heart of, or behind, almost all evil happenings in Middle-earth at the end of the Third Age.

A being of great power, Sauron once served the Great Enemy, Morgoth, and fled into the East of Middle-earth after Morgoth's defeat. There Sauron began to establish a

The Enemy and His Servants

realm during the Second Age. He revealed himself around SA 500, and within five centuries had acquired enough power to begin the building of Barad-dûr, the Dark Tower, his greatest stronghold. In pleasing form, he wormed his way into the confidences of the Elven-smiths of Eregion, who were eager for the knowledge he could provide. With it, they forged the Rings of Power, but in about SA 1600—roughly the same time when he finished building Barad-dûr—Sauron created the One Ring to take control of all their work, save the Three. In SA 1693, the War of the Elves and Sauron began. At first Sauron was triumphant, capturing Eregion and overrunning Eriador with his armies, but in SA 1700 Tar-Minastir of Númenor sent a fleet to the aid of Gil-galad, and with its help, Sauron was driven from the Westlands and defeated.

But he was not destroyed. Soon he began rebuilding his power, bringing many Men and other peoples under his sway. His defiance of the authority of the Kings of Númenor angered them, and in SA 3262 Ar-Pharazôn the Golden landed in Middle-earth with a force so enormous that Sauron simply surrendered to him. The King took Sauron as hostage back to Númenor, and in but a few years Sauron had worked his way into Ar-Pharazôn's confidence and become his chief counsellor. He convinced the King to defy the Ban of the Valar, and thus caused the destruction of Númenor, but for this Sauron paid a price. His body was destroyed in the downfall of Westernesse, and forever after he was unable to assume a fair form. His spirit returned to Mordor, where he adopted the terrifying shape of a man with black and burning-hot skin.

Sauron soon discovered that some of his chief enemies in Númenor—Elendil and his sons—had escaped to Middle-earth. He began a policy of conflict with them, which culminated in the War of the Last Alliance, in which they joined with Gil-galad to oppose him. In SA 3441, in battle on the slopes of Orodruin, he slew Elendil and Gil-galad but was himself slain, the One Ring cut from his hand by Isildur.

Just because the Dark Lord was dead did not mean he was gone however. During the Third Age, Sauron proceeded cautiously, since he lacked the One Ring and thus a great part of his power. To avoid the guard on Mordor, he dwelt in his other stronghold of Dol Guldur and worked to weaken the Dúnadan kingdoms. Through his servants, particularly the Nazgûl, he established Angmar and stirred up the Easterlings and Haradrim against Gondor. Over the long course of years, his policies succeeded. Arnor was destroyed, and Gondor weakened.

◆

When the White Council drove Sauron from Dol Guldur for good in TA 2941, he returned to Mordor, which the Nazgûl had long prepared for his return, and began actively preparing for war. Though he still lacked the One Ring, as long as it existed he remained powerful enough to subjugate the West, and he would have done so had not Frodo Baggins succeeded in his quest to destroy the Ring in the fires of Mount Doom.

For obvious reasons, no game statistics are provided for the Dark Lord. He is not a foe with whom even the greatest heroes can grapple. If player characters oppose him directly or are captured and brought before him, they have lost. He can kill them with a wave of his hands, or lay bare their minds to his probing Eye, or do whatsoever with them he will, and they cannot stop him. Only indirectly—through defeating and destroying his servants, or destroying the Ring—can anyone in Middle-earth hope to cast Sauron down.

THE NAZGÛL

The Ringwraiths, the remnants of the nine men who wore the Nine Rings, are described here.

THE LORD OF THE NAZGÛL (WITCH-KING OF ANGMAR)

> *'King, Ringwraith, Lord of the Nazgûl, he had many weapons. . . . [N]ow he was come again, bringing ruin, turning hope to despair, and victory to death.'*
>
> — *The Return of the King*

RACE: Wraith (formerly Man)

RACIAL ABILITIES: Terror (see text), Wraithform (see text)

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 16 (+5), Nimbleness 12 (+3), Perception 13 (+3), Strength 12 (+3)*, Vitality 14 (+4), Wits 14 (+4)*

REACTIONS: Stamina +7*, Swiftness +7, Willpower +7, Wisdom +7

ORDERS: Warrior, magician (sorcerer), captain

ORDER ABILITIES: Air of Command, Battle-Hardened, Evasion, Fires of Devotion, Hero's Strength, Spellcasting 9, Spell Specialty (Sorcery), Swift Strike, Tactics

ADVANCEMENTS: 52

SPELLS: *Bane-spell, Bladeshattering* (ability), *Blast of Sorcery, Blinding Flash, Command, Create Light, Display of Power, Dumbness, Enslave Beast, Evoke Fear, Fog-raising, Fog-weaving, Forgetfulness, Holding-spell, Kindle Fire, Lightning, Opening-spell, Quench Fire, Ruin, Sense Power* (ability), *Shadow of Fear* (ability), *Shadows and Phantoms, Shutting-spell, Spellbinding, Veil, Veiling Shadow, Victory-spell, Voice of Command, Wizard's Guise, Wizard's Hand, Word of Command*

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Blades (Dagger, Longsword) +10, Armed Combat: Clubs (Mace) +9, Inquire (Interrogate) +11, Inspire +8, Intimidate (Fear) +15, Language:

Black Speech +6, Language: Westron +6, Lore: Realm (Angmar, Mordor) +6, Lore: History (Men) +6, Lore: Magic +8, Lore: Servants of the Shadow +8, Observe (Spot) +11, Ranged Combat: Bows (longbow) +5, Ride (Hell-hawk, Horse) +10, Siegecraft +9, Stealth (Sneak) +8, Track (Scent) +6

EDGES: Fell-handed (+3 against all enemies of Sauron), Night-eyed 2, Strong-willed, Warwise, Weapon Mastery (Sword), Wise

FLAWS: Fealty (absolutely bound and obedient to Sauron), Hatred (the living)

HEALTH: 17

COURAGE: 6

RENOWN: 40

*: Favoured attribute or reaction

The Lord of the Nazgûl—captain of the Ringwraiths and chief servant of Sauron—is similar to the other eight (see below) but greater in power and stature. Centuries ago, beginning shortly after the Nazgûl re-arose in TA 1300, the Lord of the Nazgûl disguised himself and became the Witch-king of Angmar, a dread and mighty lord whose fearsome forces wreaked havoc upon the North-kingdom. Eventually his efforts caused the destruction and passing of Arnor. After his forces were routed at the Battle of Fornost in TA 1975, he left the North and returned to Mordor. In TA 2002, he captured Minas Ithil after a two-year siege, transforming it into Minas Morgul and filling it with horror.

The Witch-king's might as sorcerer and warrior was unsurpassed among the Nazgûl and, indeed, perhaps in all of Middle-earth. He had all the abilities and powers of his lesser brethren, but he did not suffer from their fear of water, nor from their weaknesses in daylight. He made his *Bladeshattering* spell permanent upon him, so that any blade that touched him shattered and the hand and arm wielding it became numb and useless. During the Battle of the Pelennor Fields, the Dark Lord granted him greater power still, making him the mightiest he had ever been.

But it availed him naught. Long ago, the Noldo Glorfindel prophesied that 'not by the hand of man will he fall.' And indeed he did not, for he fell by the hand of a woman, Éowyn of Rohan, aided by the Hobbit, Meriadoc Brandybuck. He paid a stiff price for his greater power. Unlike the other Nazgûl, he was slain before the Dark Lord himself was destroyed.

The Lord of the Nazgûl is taller than the other Nazgûl, and he wears a crown upon his helm.

THE EIGHT LESSER NAZGÛL

' "Do you wish them to find you? They are terrible!" '

— Aragorn, The Fellowship of the Ring

RACE: Wraith (formerly Man)

RACIAL ABILITIES: Terror (see text), Wraithform (see text)

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 14 (+4), Nimbleness 10 (+2), Perception 12 (+3), Strength 10 (+2)*, Vitality 12 (+3), Wits 12 (+3)*

REACTIONS: Stamina +5*, Swiftness +5, Willpower +5, Wisdom +5

ORDERS: Warrior, magician (sorcerer)

ORDER ABILITIES: Battle-hardened, Evasion, Spellcasting 5, Spell Specialty (Sorcery), Swift Strike

ADVANCEMENTS: 35

SPELLS: *Bane-spell, Bladeshattering, Command, Create Light, Display of Power, Dumbness, Enslave Beast, Evoke Fear, Kindle Fire, Opening-spell, Quench Fire, Sense Power* (ability), *Shadow of Fear, Shutting-spell, Spellbinding, Veil, Voice of Command, Wizard's Guise, Wizard's Hand*

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword) +10, Inquire (Interrogate) +9, Inspire +5, Intimidate (Fear) +12, Language: Black Speech +8, Language: Westron +6, Lore: History (Men) +8, Lore: Realm (Mordor) +4, Magic +6, Lore: Servants of the Shadow +8, Observe (Spot) +9, Ranged Combat: Bows (Longbow) +3, Ride (Hell-hawk, Horse) +9, Siegecraft +6, Stealth (Sneak) +6, Track (Scent) +5

EDGES: Fell-handed (+2 against all enemies of Sauron), Night-eyed 2, Strong-willed, Warwise, Weapon Mastery (Sword), Wise

FLAWS: Fealty (absolutely bound and obedient to Sauron), Hatred (the living)

HEALTH: 14

COURAGE: 5

RENOWN: 35

*: Favoured attribute or reaction

The Nazgûl, Sauron's most powerful and favoured servants, are men to whom he gave the Nine Rings long ago. Three of them, including their dread captain (see above), were great lords among the Númenóreans whom Sauron corrupted to his service. The others were powerful kings and chieftains of the Men in Middle-earth who worshipped him or were dominated by him. Each of these Men were powerful warriors—and sorcerers as well, in time—and they became more powerful and wealthy still with their Rings. But the Rings lengthened their lives over centuries, eventually causing them to fade and become Ringwraiths, lesser shadows beneath Sauron's great shadow.

Though Sauron has now taken the Nine back to himself, the Nazgûl remain powerful. In addition to the skills and powers they retain from their former lives, their existence as wraiths gives them several other weapons to wield. The first is Terror. A Nazgûl's very presence creates dread so great that it can unman even the boldest knight. The creature's Intimidate (Fear) skill operates continuously at half effect (+2 from Bearing, +6 from skill = +8). Every round, characters facing it must make Willpower tests to resist. A Nazgûl can, and often does, enhance this power with an *Evoke Fear* spell, which adds a +4 bonus for this purpose. Furthermore, when the Nazgûl gather together, they receive a +1 bonus to their Terror ability for every two Nazgûl present.

The Nazgûl's powers of fear increase at night or in darkness, and also when they are invisible and unclad. Each of them receives a +2 bonus to his Intimidate (Fear) ranks when any of these conditions apply. Multiple conditions do not grant multiple bonuses though.

Those exposed too directly or too long to the fear-powers of the Nazgûl soon suffer from a condition called the Black Breath. If a victim becomes 'Unmanned' (see page 233) due to fear a Nazgûl causes, he falls unconscious. This also applies whenever a victim suffers a disastrous failure on any roll to resist a Nazgûl's dread. After the victim awakens—which can only occur after the Nazgûl departs—the victim suffers feelings of dread, bad dreams, and the like for 1d6 days. This imposes a –2 penalty on all tests he makes during that period. A proper use of Inspire or Healing (TN 15) can reduce or eliminate this period of lingering horror.

The Nazgûl's second supernatural power is Wraithform. As a wraith, it is invisible unless it chooses to garb itself in a cloak, crown, or other raiment. However, its eyes—orbs of evil, red fire—can still be seen at times. Unless the Nazgûl wishes its eyes to be visible, spotting them requires a TN 15 Observe (Spot) test. A Nazgûl need not eat or drink. It takes only half damage from all physical attacks, heals all damage sustained at five times the normal rate, and cannot be permanently slain until its Dark Lord himself falls. It does not have Weariness Levels and thus need not make Stamina tests to resist Weariness, even from spellcasting.

However, as wraiths, the Nazgûl perceive things differently. They do not see as the living do. Rather, objects cast shadows in their minds. Sunlight, especially at noon, can weaken or destroy these shadows, making it hard for the Nazgûl to function. They suffer a –6 penalty to all Observe tests, and half that to all other tests, under such conditions. Thus, they usually move and hunt at night, when they can easily perceive that which the living can see—and many things the living cannot. They can even smell blood and detect the presence of living beings. This works similarly to their *Sense Power* ability.

Because their existence depends on Rings of Power, the Nazgûl find it very easy to detect the presence of other Rings, when such items are worn or used. They receive a +4 bonus to their tests with *Sense Power* to perceive other Rings.

The Nazgûl dislike the touch of water. Except in direst need, they refuse to ford deep rivers, crossing them instead by bridge or boat only. A river or other water-barrier between them and anything they wish to perceive imposes a –6 penalty on their Observe tests. But this weakness troubles them only when they must ride their mighty, coal-black steeds across the land. When mounted on their flying hell-hawks, they can cross all rivers and lakes with ease.

The character sheet above represents a *typical* Nazgûl. Each individual actually has slightly different skills, spells, or attributes.

SARUMAN THE WHITE

'"He is plotting to become a Power. He has a mind of metal and wheels; and he does not care for growing things...And now it is clear that he is a black traitor."'

— Treebeard, The Two Towers

RACE: From across the Sea.

RACIAL ABILITIES: Agelessness (He suffers no effects from illness or aging, though he appears to age at a very slow rate.)

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 16 (+5), Nimbleness 12 (+3)*, Perception 14 (+4), Strength 8 (+1), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 16 (+5)*

REACTIONS: Stamina +4, Swiftness +4, Willpower +8*, Wisdom +5

ORDERS: Magician, wizard

ORDER ABILITIES: Spellcasting 10, Cross-order Skill (Smithcraft), Final Strike, Imposing, Mastery of Magic, Sanctum (Isengard), Sense Power, Staff, Wizard's Heart

ADVANCEMENTS: 41

SPELLS: *Animal Messenger, Bane-spell, Beast Speech, Beast Summoning, Blade Preservation, Break Binding, Command, Crafting-spell, Create Light* (2 picks), *Display of Power, Enslave Beast, Evoke Awe, Farspeaking, Guarding-spell, Imitation-spell, Kindle Fire, Lightning, Mind-speech* (ability), *Opening-spell, Quench Fire, Resist Fear, Shadows and Phantoms, Shatter, Shutting-spell, Slumber, Spellbinding, Spoken Thoughts* (ability), *Sundering, Veil, Victory-spell, Voice of Suasion* (ability), *Voice of Command, Wizard's Guise, Wizard's Hand, Word of Command*

SKILLS: Appraise (Gems) +3, Conceal (Hide Weapon) +2, Craft: Jewellerymaking +6, Craft: Wheels and Gears +6, Debate (Negotiate, Parley) +12, Guise +4, Healing (Treat Wounds) +3, Inquire (Interrogate) +4, Insight +8, Intimidate (Power) +10, Language: Easterling +3, Language: Haradrim +2, Language: Quenya +8, Language: Sindarin +8, Language: Westron +8, Lore: History (Elves, Men) +10, Lore: Magic +10, Lore: Rings of Power +10, Observe (Spot) +8, Persuade (Charm, Fast Talk, Oratory) +12, Search +6, Siegecraft (Blasting-Fire) +1, Smithcraft (Weaponsmith) +10, Stonecraft (Building) +3

EDGES: Craftmaster, Fair, Foresighted, Friends (his network of spies), Hoard 5, Honey-tongued, Strong-willed, Wise

FLAWS: Arrogant, Grasping, Hatred (Gandalf), Oath (to perform his mission for the Valar; foresworn), Proud

HEALTH: 12

COURAGE: 6

RENOWN: 23

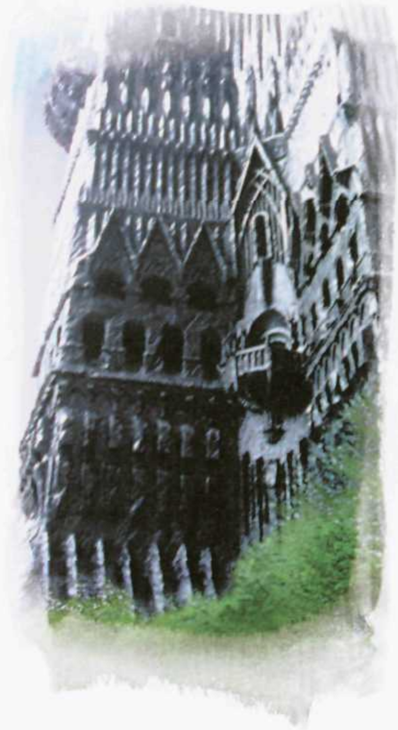
*: Favoured attribute or reaction

Chief of the Wizards—and said by many to be its most powerful member—Saruman the White (known to the Elves as Curunír, 'Man of Craft,' for his skill with his hands) arrived first of his brethren, in about the year TA 1000. [illegible] Middle-earth he travelled extensively, even into the wide East, and earned the friendship of the Lords of Gondor, whose lore he studied. So great was his power and wisdom and the respect in which he was held that he was made the head of the White Council when it formed in TA 2463. Nor did Beren the Steward hesitate to give him possession of Isengard in TA 2759, and from that time Saruman dwelt there exclusively, ceasing most of his travels.

However, Saruman's pleasant speech and seemingly wise counsels concealed the fact that he was becoming enamoured of power, desiring to make himself a lord over Middle-earth. In this, he was driven in part by rivalry with and hatred for Gandalf, whom he perceived as having more respect than himself, and in part by his own grasping, arrogant nature. He requested permission to settle at Orthanc not to help Gondor, but to avail himself of its *palantír*, and his policy within the White Council was secretly designed to hinder its aims and support his own. He also searched the area around Anduin and the Gladden Fields extensively, for he sought the Ring for himself; but he found naught save a few relics of Isildur.

In TA 2953, Saruman began fortifying Isengard and called to himself a great force of Orcs, Uruks, and Dunlendings. With these he hoped to, when the time came, defeat Rohan (whose king he was weakening through his agent Gríma) and make himself a rival or ally of Sauron, but his hopes were dashed at the Battle of Helm's Deep in TA 3019. Thereafter he was imprisoned in Orthanc for a time, after Gandalf broke his staff and cast him out of the order. But soon enough he persuaded Treebeard to release him from Isengard, and he made his way to the Shire, where he wreaked more mischief. When Frodo returned, Saruman was slain by Gríma, who turned on him after one too many abuses. His spirit was denied passage to the West.

Saruman's greatest power, even to the very end after he had fallen into evil, was his voice. Possessed of a sweet tongue and an ability to corrupt reason second to none, the very sound of his voice was enough to delight even his enemies. Only the wisest and most powerful could resist the spell of Saruman's words, and even they would give pause before his melodious voice. Lesser men were quickly and easily enthralled by the voice of Saruman, with the effects not wearing off until long after they went away from him.



Like all the Five Wizards, Saruman resembles a man, though he is in fact from across the Sea. He has a long face with a high forehead and deep, dark eyes that quickly reflect his anger, scorn, or supposed benevolence and tolerance. He has white hair and a white beard, though with strands of black about the lips and ears. Until he revealed himself openly to Gandalf in TA 3019, he wore robes of white, and so was known as Saruman the White. Thereafter he wore robes that changed colour as he moved, and he had a ring on his hand.

GOLLUM

'"My heart tells me that he has some part to play yet...before the end; and when that comes, the pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many—yours not least."'
— Gandalf, The Fellowship of the Ring

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 5 (±0), Nimbleness 10 (+2), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 9 (+1), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 7 (±0)

REACTIONS: Stamina +5, Swiftness +4, Willpower +2, Wisdom +1

HEALTH: 11

SKILLS: Acrobatics (Balance) +6, Climb +9, Games (Riddles) +3, Jump +5, Language: Westron (Common) +2, Observe (Hear, Smell) +6, Run +4, Search +6, Stealth (Hide, Sneak) +9, Survival (Caverns) +6, Swim +5, Track (Scent) +5

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

CUNNING: Gollum has +3 Wits for purposes of devising cruel and malicious traps, tricks, and ambushes.

MALICIOUS STRENGTH: 'His malice is great and gives him a strength hardly to be believed in one so lean and withered.' (Aragorn, *The Fellowship of the Ring*). Gollum has +3 Strength for evil purposes, such as strangling an undeserving hobbit or escaping the grasp of a righteous captor.

THROTTLING: If Gollum can attack an adversary by surprise, he gets +2 Strength (in addition to the bonuses granted by his Malicious Strength, if applicable) to maintain the hold and inflict throttling damage.

DESCRIPTION: Once a Hobbit names Sméagol who lived near the Gladden Fields, Gollum began his long descent into darkness and evil in about TA 2463, when his friend Déagol found the One Ring and he murdered him for it. The Ring granted Gollum powers of invisibility and heightened his malice and wickedness. Soon his relatives forced him to leave his grandmother's hole, and he wandered about, committing evil acts. Eventually, driven by hatred of the sun, he wormed his way into caverns deep below the Misty Mountains, where he lived on goblin-meat and the fish he caught in the underground lake he called home.

In TA 2941, Gollum unwittingly lost the Ring—his 'precious'—which Bilbo Baggins found. After Bilbo defeated him in a riddle-game and escaped, Gollum eventually worked up the courage to leave his caves and pursue the 'thief.' Driven by lust for the Ring, he wandered, making his way to Mordor, where Sauron captured and tortured him. After Sauron released him in TA 3017, Aragorn found Gollum near the Dead Marshes, captured him, and took him to Thranduil's realm in Mirkwood so Gandalf could question him.

In TA 3018, Gollum escaped from the Elves and soon found a way into Moria and became trapped there. When the Fellowship entered via the East-gate, Gollum picked up the trail of the Ring and began following them. He trailed Frodo into the Emyn Muil, where the Ring-bearer tricked him, captured him, and exacted a promise of service from him. Part of Gollum wanted to serve faithfully and well, but the evil part of him was stronger, and he led Frodo and Sam to Shelob's lair, nearly getting the Ring-bearer killed. Gollum kept following the Ring as Frodo approached Mount Doom. When Frodo refused to destroy the Ring, Gollum attacked him, biting off his finger to get his 'precious'—but then fell over the edge and into the Fire, ensuring the success of Frodo's quest.

By the time of the War of the Ring, Gollum—originally an ordinary hobbit—was a small, emaciated, wiry thing with black skin, big, flapping feet, large, pale eyes, and long, thin hands possessed of a malicious strength and well-suited for grabbing and strangling.

GRÍMA WORMTONGUE

'Slowly Wormtongue rose. . .He bared his teeth; and then with a hissing breath he spat before the king's feet, and darting to one side, he fled down the stair.'

— The Two Towers

RACE: Man (Middle Man)

RACIAL ABILITIES: Adaptable (+2 to Swiftness), Dominion of Man (+1 Courage), Skilled (extra skill picks)

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 5 (±0), Nimbleness 8 (+1)*, Perception 8 (+1), Strength 4 (±0), Vitality 6 (±0), Wits 10 (+2)*

REACTIONS: Stamina +1, Swiftness +2*, Willpower +2, Wisdom +1

ORDER: Rogue

ORDER ABILITIES: Lurking in Shadows, Scoundrel's Fortune, Sanctuary (secret bolt-hole within Meduseld)

ADVANCEMENTS: 4

SKILLS: Appraise (Gems) +1, Armed Combat: Blade (Longsword) +2, Conceal (Hide Treasure, Hide Weapon) +3, Guise +2, Inquire (Converse) +3, Intimidate (Malice) +2, Language: Rohiric +6, Language: Westron +6, Legerdemain +1, Lore: History (Rohan) +6, Lore: Realm (Rohan) +4, Observe (Spot) +5, Perform (Tell Stories) +2, Persuade (Fast Talk) +7, Run +2, Ride +2, Stealth (Hide, Sneak) +6

EDGES: Furtive, Honey-tongued

FLAWS: Craven, Fealty (Saruman)

HEALTH: 6

COURAGE: 4

RENOWN: 4

*: Favoured attribute or reaction

At one time Gríma, nicknamed 'Wormtongue' for his twisting speech and oft-hurtful words, was a trusted advisor to King Théoden of Rohan—but in truth he served Saruman. With his words, Gríma poisoned the king's mind, providing him such information as Saruman directed and driving Théoden to a premature dotage.

Many in Théoden's household mistrusted and hated Gríma, though the king continued to value his counselor's opinions and 'wisdom.' When Gandalf confronted and exposed him during the War of the Ring, Gríma fled to Orthanc, where he later tried to kill Gandalf—or perhaps Saruman—by hurling the *palantír* kept in the tower at him.

When Saruman persuaded Treebeard to let him leave Orthanc, Wormtongue accompanied the fallen wizard to the Shire. Once there, Wormtongue became more and more wretched, eventually killing Lotho Sackville-Baggins—and possibly eating him. When Frodo and his friends returned to the Shire, an abusive gesture from Gríma's master caused Wormtongue to snap and slit Saruman's throat, after which he was shot dead by hobbits.

DUNLENDINGS

' "All Isengard must be emptied, and Saruman has armed the wild hillmen and herd-folk of Dunland beyond the rivers, and these also he loosed upon us." '

— Ceorl, The Two Towers

RACE: Man (Middle Man)

RACIAL ABILITIES: Adaptable (+2 to Stamina), Dominion of Man (+1 Courage for prominent Dunlending NPCs), Skilled (extra skill picks)

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 6 (±0), Nimbleness 7 (±0), Perception 7 (±0), Strength 8 (+1)*, Vitality 8 (+1)*, Wits 6 (±0)

REACTIONS: Stamina +3*, Swiftness +1, Willpower +1, Wisdom +1

Order: Typically barbarian or warrior (this write-up assumes warrior)

Order Abilities: Evasion *or* Favoured Weapon

Advancements: 0 (but may have one or more)

Skills: Armed Combat +4, Climb +1, Craft (choose one) +1, Healing +1, Inspire +1, Intimidate +2, Jump +1, Language: Dunlendish +4, Language: Westron (Common) +1, Lore: History (Dunland) +4, Observe +3, Ranged Combat +3, Ride +3, Run+1, Siegecraft +3, Survival +2,

Edges: Warrior's Heart

Flaws: None

Health: 9

Courage: 0

Renown: 0

*: Favoured attribute or reaction

Tall, dark-haired, slightly swarthy Men living in Dunland—a region west of the Misty Mountains and south of the Glanduin River—the Dunlendings (Sindarin '*Gwathuirim*') are descendants of Men who once lived in the valleys of the White Mountains and the plains of Calenardhon. They emigrated from there when the Dúnedain founded Gondor, and later too when Calenardhon became Rohan. Most settled in Dunland, though a few pressed on into Eriador and became the now much more civilized Men of Bree.

The Dunlendings speak their own ancient language and practice primitive customs unique to them. They are mostly hillsmen and herders, with few villages or towns of any size. Fierce and strong in war—though normally not as well armed for battle as most other Men—they have a deep hatred of the Men of Gondor and the Rohirrim, whom they call *forgoil*, 'strawheads.'

The Dunlendings blame those other Men for depriving them of their lands of old. During the War of the Ring, the Dunlendings served Saruman. Many were slain at the Battles of the Fords of Isen and at Helm's Deep.

ORCS

There are three basic varieties of Orc: Orcs, Uruk-hai, and half-orcs.

ORC

> *'One was clad in ragged brown and was armed with a bow of horn; it was of a small breed, black-skinned...evidently a tracker of some kind.'*
>
> *— The Return of the King*

Race: Orc

Racial Abilities: Claws (Orcs can do 1 point of damage with their claw-like nails), Curse of Daylight (–4 penalty to all tests in sunlight), Tough Skin (counts as 1 point of armour; this adds together with any other armour worn)

Attributes: Bearing 6 (±0), Nimbleness 7 (±0), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 8 (+1)*, Vitality 8 (+1)*, Wits 5 (±0)

Reactions: Stamina +2*, Swiftness +1, Willpower ±0, Wisdom ±0

Order: Typically barbarian or warrior (this write-up assumes warrior)

Order Abilities: Evasion *or* Favoured Weapon (Scimitar)

Advancements: 0 (but many Orcs have one or more)

Skills: Armed Combat +4, Intimidate (Fear) +2, Language: Black Speech +4, Language: Common +2, Language: Orkish (dialect) +4, Lore: Race (Orcs) +4, Observe (Smell *or* Spot) +4, Ranged Combat +2, Ride (Wolf) +3, Run +3, Siegecraft +2, Stealth (Sneak) +4, Track (Scent) +1

Edges: Keen-nosed, Night-eyed 2

Flaws: Craven, Hatred (Dwarves, Elves)

Health: 9

Courage: 0

Renown: 0

*: Favoured attribute or reaction

Also known as 'goblins,' Orcs have tough skin—leathery or even scaly, blackish or greenish in colour. Their noses, flat and keen, allow them to track accurately by scent. Their blood runs black, and the nails on their hands are as strong as claws. They possess great endurance and can run swiftly for long distances if they must. But most are lazy, preferring the easiest method of accomplishing any task.

Sauron and Saruman both use Orcs as soldiers, and tribes and bands of Orcs not directly under the sway of an evil master often fight among themselves or with Dwarves or Elves as they may. When they go to war, they carry horrid banners to mark their units, often in black or red, to frighten their foes.

Orcs favour the scimitar as a weapon, though they use other swords and daggers—sometimes saw-toothed—as well. Their weapons' blades are black and often poisoned. Larger Orcs sometimes prefer spears or axes. Orc arrows are short and black with black fletching. Orcs wear heavy and clumsy Orc chainmail (see page 205), though their tough skin also offers some protection against the weapons of their foes.

Although they cannot make objects of beauty, Orcs are skilled with their hands, able to craft clever things, devices of torture, and the like. They can delve and mine nearly as well as Dwarves. Orcs' food is foul to other races. They eat the flesh of Men, horses, and many creatures stranger still.

Many breeds of Orcs exist. In the mountains, particularly in the North (including their strongholds at Gundabad and Mount Gram), Orcs tend to be taller and stronger, though neither as tall nor as strong as Uruks. Orcs from more southerly regions and from Mordor, tend to be shorter, broader, and have crook-legs and longer arms. Orcs from different places or tribes often quarrel or fight among themselves and cannot understand each others' speech well, if at all, so they rely instead on the Black Speech or Common. A character with Lore: Race (Orcs) can tell, by their speech and customs, where a particular Orc or group of Orcs comes from.

Orcs despise the sun and its painful bright light. They become weaker and less steady on their feet in daylight. In game terms, they suffer a –4 penalty to all tests in sunlight. But their eyes can see as well at night or in dark tunnels as Men can in the light. When they travel, Orcs suffer 'nighttime' modifiers during the day, but no modifier at night.

In the Battle of the Five Armies (TA 2941), Bolg, son of Azog, commanded a great host of Orcs and Wargs that was defeated by the combined might of Men, Elves, and Dwarves. Three parts of the Orcs of the North perished in that battle, leading to diminished Orc activity in that part of the world for several decades. However, long before the War of the Ring, the Orcs began to rise again throughout Middle-earth, raiding, attacking, and wreaking havoc. Heroes may often find occasion to oppose them.

URUK

> *'We are the Uruk-hai: we do not stop the fight for night or day, for fair weather or for storm. We come to kill, by sun or moon.'*
> — *The Two Towers*

RACE: Uruk

RACIAL ABILITIES: Claws (Uruks can do 1 point of damage with their claw-like nails), Tough Skin (counts as 1 point of armour; this adds together with any other armour worn)

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 8 (+1), Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 10 (+2)*, Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 7 (±0)

REACTIONS: Stamina +3*, Swiftness +2, Willpower +1, Wisdom +1

ORDER: Warrior

ORDER ABILITIES: Evasion *or* Favoured Weapon (Scimitar)

ADVANCEMENTS: 3 (some Uruks have more)

SKILLS: Armed Combat +7, Intimidate (Fear) +4, Language: Black Speech +4, Language: Common +2, Language: Orkish (dialect) +5, Lore: Race (Orcs) +4, Observe (Smell *or* Spot) +6, Ranged Combat +5, Run +5, Siegecraft +5, Stealth (Sneak) +2, Track (Scent) +1

EDGES: Night-eyed 2

FLAWS: Fealty (to Sauron, Saruman, or other master), Hatred (Dwarves, Elves)

HEALTH: 12

COURAGE: 0

RENOWN: 0

*: Favoured attributes or reaction

Created by Sauron in the Third Age—by breeding either Men or Trolls with normal Orcs—the *Uruk-hai*, or Uruks, are larger, fiercer, stronger Orcs. They have tough, black skin and faces, and slanted eyes. They first appeared about TA 2475, when with others of Sauron's forces they overran Ithilien and took the city of Osgiliath. Nearly as tall as men, they stand straight-limbed and strong and do not shrink from the light of the Sun. They make fearsome soldiers, either in units of their own or when given command of squads of Orcs, whom they mock for their weaknesses and cowardice. Uruks prefer longswords and short, broad-bladed stabbing-swords to the scimitars of Orcs. They also use longbows, like those of Men, and longer arrows.

Half-Orc

> *' "But these creatures of Isengard, these half-orcs and goblin-men that the foul craft of Saruman has bred, they will not quail at the sun." '*
>
> *—Gamling, The Two Towers*

Race: Half-Orc

Racial abilities: None

Attributes: Bearing 7 (±0), Nimbleness 7 (±0)*, Perception 8 (+1)*, Strength 8 (+1), Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 6 (±0),

Reactions: Stamina +2, Swiftness +2*, Willpower +1, Wisdom +1

Order: Typically rogue or warrior (this write-up assumes rogue)

Order Abilities: Lurking In Shadows

Advancements: 0 (but may have one or more)

Skills: Appraise +2, Conceal +3, Guise +2, Inquire +3, Language: Black Speech +2, Language: Orkish (dialect) +2, Language: Common +5, Lore: Race (Men, Orcs) +2, Observe (Spot) +4, Persuade +3, Run +1, Search +1, Stealth +5, Survival +2

Edges: Furtive, Night-eyed 1

Flaws: Fealty (to Sauron, Saruman, or other master)

Health: 9

Courage: 0

Renown: 0

*: Favoured attribute or reaction

Through some foul means, Saruman—and perhaps Sauron as well—found a way to breed Orcs with Men, creating a mongrel race of Men with some Orc features and with Orc wickedness in their hearts. They have sallow faces and sly, slanting eyes, but their height and build is more like Men. Some half-orcs look more like Orcs than others. These may take a flaw, Orc Ancestry, which means they cannot hide their Orc blood without use of Guise. Other half-orcs, while their appearance is noteworthy, can pass as normal Men.

Combining mannish cleverness with Orc strength, half-orcs make fearsome opponents on the battlefield. They favour longswords and battle-axes. However, many of them instead serve Saruman as spies and ruffians.

Trolls

There are two basic varieties of Troll: Trolls and Olog-hai.

Troll

> *' "It is broad daylight with a bright sun, and yet you come back trying to scare me with a tale of live trolls waiting for us in this glade!" '*
>
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

Race: Troll

Racial Abilities: Tough Skin (counts as 3 points of armour; this adds together with any other armour worn), Turn to Stone (daylight permanently petrifies Trolls)

Attributes: Bearing 8 (+1), Nimbleness 5 (±0), Perception 6 (±0), Strength 14 (+4)*, Vitality 14 (+4)*, Wits 5 (±0)

Reactions: Stamina +6*, Swiftness ±0, Willpower +1, Wisdom ±0

Order: Warrior or rogue, if any (this write-up assumes warrior)

Order Abilities: Favoured Weapon

Advancements: 0 (but may have one or more)

Skills: Armed Combat +7, Intimidate (Might) +5, Language: Black Speech +1, Language: Common +4, Observe +3, Ranged Combat +3, Track +2

Edges: Hardy, Night-eyed 2

Flaws: None

Health: 18

Courage: 0

Renown: 0

*: Favoured attribute or reaction

Trolls have extremely tough skin and strong bodies but dull wits. Moreover, Trolls like sunlight even less than Orcs, for if it touches them, they permanently turn to stone.

Trolls are larger than Men and immensely strong. Some are even stronger than listed above. They make fearsome opponents in battle. They most often wield huge clubs and hammers (3d6 or 3d6+1 damage).

Many types of Trolls exist: snow-trolls, mountain-trolls, stone-trolls, cave-trolls, hill-trolls, and others. They typically live up in the mountains, in caves and caverns where they can hide by day from the light of the Sun. They do not build, though they may dwell within the ruined towers and castles of Men. They are particularly common in the Ettenmoors, the Troll-fells north of Rivendell. They eat flesh, including that of Men, Dwarves, and Hobbits.

Some trolls have more than one head. These monstrous beings, known as *ettens*, have +1 Perception and Observe due to their multiple sets of eyes. However, at times the heads argue with each other, preventing the troll from taking other actions.

OLOG-HAI

> *'Trolls were abroad, no longer dull-witted, but cunning and armed with dreadful weapons.'*
>
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

RACE: Olog-hai

RACIAL ABILITIES: Tough Skin (counts as 3 points of armour; this adds together with any other armour worn)

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 9 (+1), Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 16 (+5)*, Vitality 15 (+4)*, Wits 7 (±0)

REACTIONS: Stamina +7*, Swiftness +1, Willpower +2, Wisdom +1

ORDER(S): Warrior

ORDER ABILITIES: Favoured Weapon

ADVANCEMENTS: 0 (but may have one or more)

SKILLS: Armed Combat +9, Intimidate (Might) +7, Language: Black Speech +4, Observe +5, Ranged Combat +3, Siegecraft +5, Track +2

EDGES: Hammerhand, Hardy, Night-eyed 2

FLAWS: None

HEALTH: 20

COURAGE: 0

RENOWN: 0

*: Favoured attribute or reaction

Bred by Sauron through his foul arts, the Olog-hai are larger, stronger, swifter, and far more cunning than other Trolls. They do not turn to stone in the light of the sun, and as long as the Dark Lord's will holds sway over them they suffer no other ill effects from it. Otherwise, they suffer a –2 to all tests in sunlight. Filled with Sauron's malice, they dwell in Mordor, awaiting only his word to go to war.

A NOTE ON REACTIONS

You may notice that the reactions listed for many of the creatures in this section don't match up directly with the Attribute modifiers as they should. This represents the fact that the creatures are more advanced with those reactions than their Attributes would normally indicate, just as if a character has used his advancement picks to improve his own reactions.

FELL BEASTS AND MONSTERS

> *'[O]rcs were issuing out of a thousand holes. Under the boughs of Mirkwood there was deadly strife of Elves and Men and fell beasts.'*
>
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

In addition to the servants of Sauron, many other foul and dangerous creatures lurk amidst the wild and strange places of Middle-earth. In the course of their travels and adventures, player characters might encounter them in dark caves beneath the Misty Mountains, ancient ruins of Men, the shadowy depths of Mirkwood, or the forgotten deserts and wastes of the South. While only a few such creatures are presented here, you can also use the descriptions and game statistics for these creatures as guidelines for building your own monsters.

THE BALROG OF MORIA

> *'[I]t was like a great shadow, in the middle of which was a dark form, of man-shape maybe, yet greater; and a power and terror seemed to be in it and to go before it.'*
>
> *— The Fellowship of the Ring*

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 23 (+8), Nimbleness 10 (+2), Perception 12 (+3), Strength 20 (+7), Vitality 20 (+7), Wits 15 (+4)

REACTIONS: Stamina +10, Swiftness +5, Willpower +12, Wisdom +10

HEALTH: 27

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Blade (Longsword) +12, Armed Combat: Whip +12, Intimidate (Fear) +20, Observe (Spot) +8

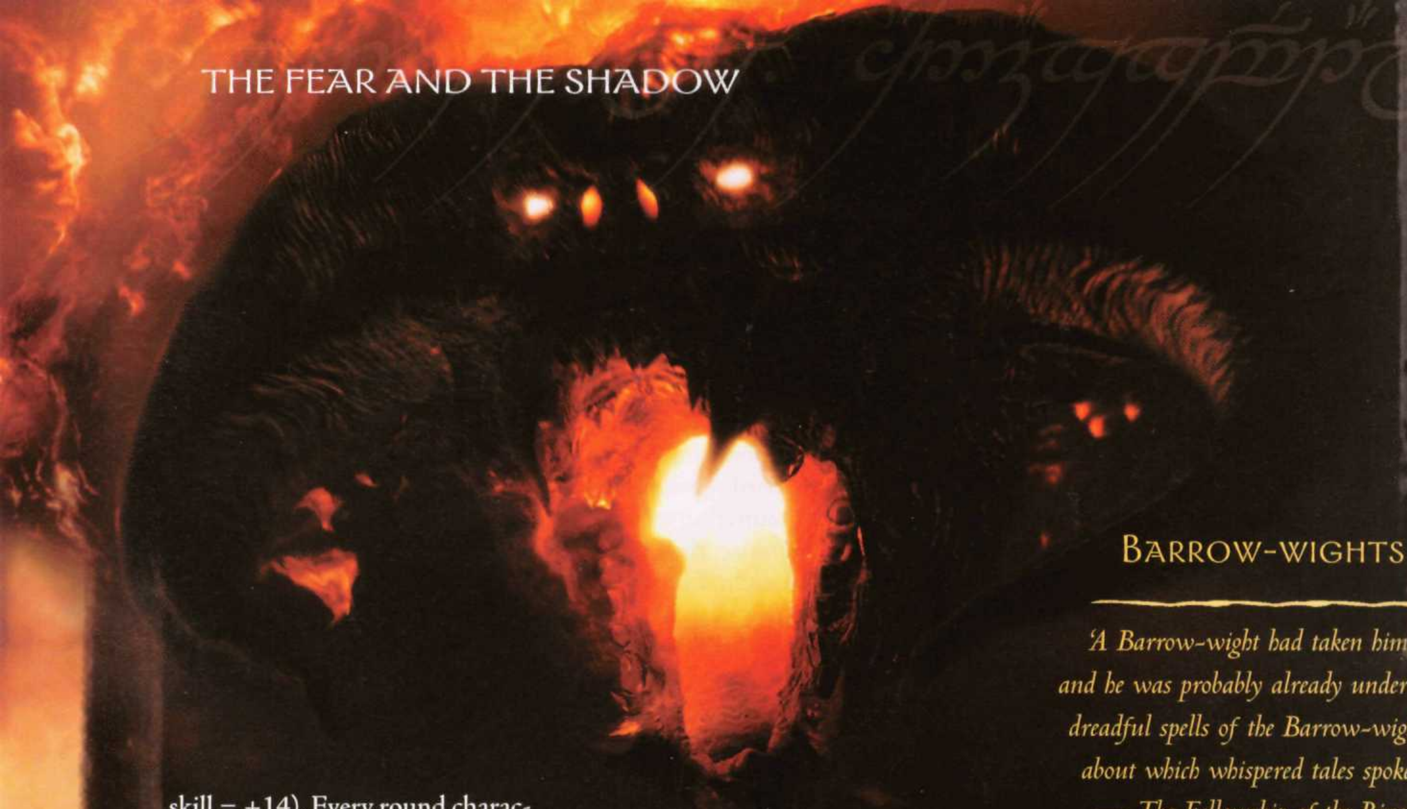
SPECIAL ABILITIES:

CLOAKED IN DARKNESS: Deep shadow surrounds the Balrog like a vast cloak of darkness. All non-magical light within 30 feet of the Balrog is extinguished or dimmed, and anyone caught within this extreme darkness suffers a –5 test result penalty to all physical tests.

HEART OF FIRE: At the Balrog's heart is a fell power of fire, and living flame courses over every surface of its body. It may Kindle Fire (as the spell) with only a touch, and any who touch or grapple with a Balrog suffer 1d6 damage every round from its unholy flames.

POWER: Though it cannot cast spells as such, the Balrog possesses awesome strength and power. For one action it can counter-spell any spell (see page 170). It does not have to make a Stamina test to resist Weariness when using this power.

TERROR: The Balrog's very presence creates terror. Its Intimidate (Fear) skill operates continuously at half effect (+4 from Bearing, +10 from



skill = +14). Every round characters facing it must make Willpower tests to resist (see page 233).

Weapons: The Balrog carries two weapons. The first is an enormous sword, far too big for any Man to wield, that does 4d6 damage. The second is a many-thonged whip that does 2d6+3 damage. On a superior success or better with the whip, the Balrog may choose to entangle a foe instead of doing damage. Anyone caught by the thongs must make a TN 15 Strength test to escape. Additionally, the Balrog can kindle fire on either of its weapons, causing them to do +1d6 damage—or 1d6 per round to anyone entangled by the whip.

Wings: The Balrog has enormous wings, allowing it to fly at a pace of 40 yards per action if it has room to use them.

Description: A terrifying creature of both shadow and fire, the Balrog of Moria was one of the chief servants of Morgoth many years ago, in the First Age of the world. Gifted with terrible powers by the Great Enemy, it helped its evil master in his wars in Beleriand, slaying many Elves and Men. When Morgoth was cast down, the Balrog fled far away, hiding deep beneath the Hithaeglir. There it remained for many centuries, until the Dwarves of Khazad-dûm, delving greedily for *mithril*, encountered it. It slew Durin III, Náin I, and many other Dwarves, soon causing them to flee their ancient home forever. It then gathered to it many Orcs and Trolls, ruling a dark kingdom through fear and power. It encountered the Fellowship of the Ring when that group passed through Moria, and it battled long and terribly with Gandalf the Grey, being slain by him and slaying him in turn. Whether any other Balrogs remain in Middle-earth, concealed in the deep and shadowy places of the world, none can say.

Balrog, a Sindarin word meaning 'demon of power,' describes this creature full well. Like unto a gigantic man with demonic features, it is filled with darkness, and yet fire covers it. A mane streams out behind it, and its dark wings fill the sky to either side. It carries two weapons: a great sword with fire on the blade, and a many-thonged whip. It is very strong and possessed of terrifying power. Few, if any, in Middle-earth can stand against it.

BARROW-WIGHTS

'A Barrow-wight had taken him, and he was probably already under the dreadful spells of the Barrow-wights about which whispered tales spoke.'
— The Fellowship of the Ring

Attributes: Bearing 12 (+3), Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 12 (+3), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 10 (+2)

Reactions: Stamina +5, Swiftness +4, Willpower +4, Wisdom +3

Health: 13

Skills: Armed Combat: Blades (Longsword) +6, Intimidate (Fear) +6, Observe (Spot) +5, Stealth (Hide) +8

Special Abilities:

Burned by Daylight: A Barrow-wight exposed to sunlight burns, taking 2d6 damage every round.

Icy Touch: A Barrow-wight's touch is chill and deadly. For every round of contact, the victim loses 2 points of Strength and Vitality. When either attribute reaches zero, the victim falls unconscious for 2d6 x 10 minutes. Lost points are regained at the rate of 1 in each attribute per 10 minutes—or in full upon the application of the *Healing-spell* or when the victim awakens.

Spells: A typical Barrow-wight can cast the following spells: *Bladeshattering, Create Light, Evoke Fear, Fog-raising, Forgetfulness, Holding-spell, Spellbinding.* Some wights may know other or additional spells (such as *Misdirection, Power of the Land,* or *Slumber*). It need not make a Stamina test to cast any of its spells.

DESCRIPTION: In Eriador, between the Old Forest and Bree, lie the Tyrn Gorthad, or the Barrow-downs as they are now known. A region of hills and downs, it contains many burial-mounds, some the tombs of ancient kings of the forefathers of the Edain, and others of the Dúnedain who later ruled this land. In the middle Third Age, during the 1600s, when the plague came to the North and devastated the people living there, the Witch-king of Angmar sent evil spirits—wights—to dwell within the mounds and make the Barrow-downs a place of horror. Since that day, few folk venture into this dread region.

Barrow-wights are horrible, undead creatures. Although they have bodily form, they are evil spirits who wish to slay the living. Powerful within their barrows or at night, they cannot stand the touch of sunlight. They prefer to attack from surprise, using their spells and powers to confuse their prey, bind it with spells, and then take it into the barrow to slay it and consume its spirit.

THE BROOD OF UNGOLIANT

'Suddenly he saw, too, that there were spiders huge and horrible sitting in the branches above him, and ring or no ring he trembled with fear...'

— The Hobbit

SMALL GIANT SPIDER

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 7 (±0), Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 7 (±0), Strength 7 (±0), Vitality 6 (±0), Wits 5 (±0)

REACTIONS: Stamina +2, Swiftness +3, Willpower +1, Wisdom ±0

HEALTH: 6

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Fangs) +4, Climb +10, Intimidate (Fear) +4, Jump +6, Observe (Spot) +4, Stealth (Sneak) +6

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

FANGS/POISON: Small giant spiders have fangs that do 1d6–1 (minimum of 1) points of damage with a bite. If the bite inflicts even a single point of damage, they can inject poison into the victim. They may choose a deadly poison (does 1d6 damage per minute for the next 10 minutes, TN10 Stamina reaction for half damage) or one that causes sickness and weakness (victim loses 1d6 Vitality and Strength immediately [TN 12 Stamina reaction for half damage], and 1 point of both attributes per minute for the next 10 minutes; if either attribute reaches zero, the victim falls unconscious; points in both attributes return at the rate of 1 per hour after effects cease).

WEBS: Giant spiders can weave thick, sticky webs. Cutting through a strand requires 3 points of damage from an edged weapon. Pulling one apart requires a TN 15 Strength test. A victim who has been completely wrapped up must make a TN 20 Strength test to break free.

LARGE GIANT SPIDER

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 9 (+1), Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 9 (+1), Vitality 9 (+1), Wits 6 (±0)

REACTIONS: Stamina +3, Swiftness +3, Willpower +2, Wisdom ±0

HEALTH: 10

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Fangs) +6, Climb +10, Intimidate (Fear) +6, Jump +7, Observe (Spot) +5, Stealth (Sneak) +6

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

FANGS/POISON: Large giant spiders have fangs that do 1d6+1 points of damage with a bite. If the bite inflicts even a single point of damage, they can inject poison into the victim. They may choose a deadly poison (does 1d6 damage per minute for the next 10 minutes, TN 12 Stamina reaction for half damage) or one that causes sickness and weakness (victim loses 1d6 Vitality and Strength immediately [TN 15 Stamina reaction for half damage], and 1 point of both attributes per minute for the next 10 minutes; if either attribute reaches zero, the victim falls unconscious; points in both attributes return at the rate of 1 per hour after effects cease).

WEBS: Giant spiders can weave thick, sticky webs. Cutting through a strand requires 3 points of damage from an edged weapon; pulling one apart requires a TN 15 Strength test. A victim who has been completely wrapped up must make a TN 25 Strength test to break free.

DESCRIPTION: These horrible creatures, the children of Shelob and her kin, infest parts of Mirkwood and also live in other dark and evil places of the world. Although not smart, they are crafty, and can speak Westron (Common) in creaking, hissing voices.

SHELOB

'There agelong she had dwelt, an evil thing in spider-form, even such as once of old had lived in the Land of the Elves in the West that is now under the Sea.'

— The Two Towers

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 13 (+3), Nimbleness 10 (+2), Perception 10 (+2), Strength 16 (+5), Vitality 12 (+3), Wits 9 (+1)

REACTIONS: Stamina +5, Swiftness +6, Willpower +4, Wisdom +3

HEALTH: 17

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Claws, Horns, Fangs) +8, Climb +9, Intimidate (Fear) +10, Jump +8, Observe (Spot) +7, Run +6, Stealth (Sneak) +9

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

FANGS/POISON: Shelob's fangs do 2d6+3 points of damage with a bite. If the bite inflicts even a single point of damage, she can inject poison into the victim. She may choose a deadly poison (does 2d6 damage per minute for the next 20 minutes, TN 18 Stamina reaction for half damage), or one that causes sickness and weakness (victim loses 2d6 Vitality and Strength immediately [TN 20 Stamina reaction for half damage], and 2 points of both attributes per minute for the next 20 minutes; if either attribute reaches zero, the victim falls unconscious; points in both attributes return at the rate of 1 per hour after effects cease).

CLAWS AND HORNS: Shelob's legs end in a great claw that does 1d6+3 damage. Horns thrust from her head, and they do 2d6 damage if she uses them as a weapon.

STENCH: Shelob's belly gives forth a foul stench. Those who fight her must make a TN 10 Stamina test at the beginning of the combat to withstand it. Those who fail suffer a –3 test result penalty as long as they remain in her deadly presence. If a character tries to attack her from beneath, increase the TN to 15.

TERROR: Shelob's very presence creates terror. Her Intimidate (Fear) skill operates continuously at half effect (+2 from Bearing, +5 from skill = +7). Every round, characters facing her must make Willpower tests to resist (see page 233).

THICK SKIN: Shelob's skin is so pitted with corruption and toughened with evil folds and growths, that it provides 4 points of armour. Her many eyes remain vulnerable, though, and do not receive this protection (–5 test result penalty to hit).

WEBS: Shelob can weave thick, sticky webs. Cutting through a strand requires 5 points of damage from an edged weapon. Pulling one apart requires a TN 20 Strength test. A victim who has been completely wrapped up must make a TN 30 Strength test to break free.

DESCRIPTION: Shelob dwells within caves in Cirith Ungol ('Cleft of the Spider') in the Ephel Dúath. Though she does not serve Sauron, he uses her both as a guard on the pass there and as a way of slaying horribly those he captures or who fail him.

Shelob is huge, larger than any hunting beast, with a black, bloated, sagging body. On a stalk-like neck, she bears a head with many eyes that glitter with malice and fell purpose. Despite her bulk, she can move with great speed on her many legs, often taking her prey unawares.

HELL-HAWK

'But now wheeling swiftly across it...he saw in the middle airs below him five birdlike forms, horrible as carrion-fowl yet greater than eagles, cruel as death.'

— The Return of the King

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 6 (±0), Nimbleness 10 (+2) (reduce Nimbleness to 7 while the creature is on the ground), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 8 (+1), Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 4 (±0)

REACTIONS: Stamina +2, Swiftness +3, Willpower +1, Wisdom ±0

HEALTH: 9

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Beak, Talons) +5, Observe (Spot) +6

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

BEAK: A hell-hawk can strike with its beak, inflicting 2d6 damage.

FLIGHT: A hell-hawk can fly ('jog') at a pace of 40 yards per action. It can 'run' for a single action at 80 yards per action. It can also 'sprint' for 160 yards as a full-round action.

STENCH: Hell-hawks have a foul stench. Those who fight them must make a TN 10 Stamina test at the beginning of the combat to withstand it. Those who fail suffer a –2 test result penalty as long as they remain in the creature's presence.

TALONS: A hell-hawk can strike with its talons, inflicting 2d6+2 damage.

DESCRIPTION: Sauron bred these foul, winged creatures—which resemble gigantic, featherless carrion-birds with leathery wings—as steeds for the Nazgûl. Terrifying in their own right, they are even more so when they serve as mounts for the Dark Lord's chief servants. Besides their beak and talons, which can rend flesh as well as any axe or sword, they possess a foul stench that often overwhelms those who face them.

MÛMAKIL (OLIPHAUNTS)

'Big as a house, much bigger than a house, it looked to him, a grey-clad moving hill.'

— The Two Towers

ATTRIBUTES: Bearing 8 (+1), Nimbleness 3 (–1), Perception 4 (±0), Strength 18 (+6), Vitality 15 (+4), Wits 2 (–2)

REACTIONS: Stamina +9, Swiftness ±0, Willpower ±0, Wisdom ±0

HEALTH: 21

SKILLS: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Tusks) +3, Intimidate (Size) +6, Ranged Combat +3, Run +2, Survival (Jungles, Plains) +5

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

HURLED MISSILES: A *mûmak* can pick up large objects—boulders, trees, Men—and hurl them as missiles using its Ranged Combat skill. These objects typically have a range of 5/10/15/25/+5, and do 3d6 (plus Strength modifier) if they hit. A thrown character takes that much damage when he impacts the target.

Trample: By making a Full Round movement action over or through a target and making a Strength test to hit, a *mûmak* can knock down and trample a target, inflicting 6d6 damage.

Triple Hide: The *mûmak*'s hide is thick and strong, so strong that it protects it from attacks. Its hide counts as 9 points of armour. The only vulnerable spots on its body—which does not receive this protection—are its eyes (–20 test result penalty to hit).

Tusks: A *mûmak* can inflict 1d6+2 damage with its tusks.

Description: An enormous beast from the Southron lands, the *mûmak*, or 'oliphaunt,' is by nature easy-tempered unless frightened or provoked. However, the Haradrim have captured some and trained them for use as beasts of burden—or war. A *mûmak* taught to fight is a frightening sight indeed: dressed in scarlet and gold, with a war-tower and rider upon its back, it can rout enemy forces and break through any shield-wall. Only by shooting at its eyes or frightening it with great fires can the warriors of the West turn it aside.

Wolves, Wargs, and Werewolves

> *'Without warning a storm of howls broke out fierce and wild all about the camp. A great host of Wargs had gathered silently and was now attacking them. . .'*
>
> — *The Fellowship of the Ring*

Wolf

Attributes: Bearing 6 (±0), Nimbleness 6 (±0), Perception 8 (+1), Strength 8 (+1), Vitality 8 (+1), Wits 2 (–2)

Reactions: Stamina +2, Swiftness +2, Willpower ±0, Wisdom ±0

Health: 9

Skills: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Fangs) +4, Intimidate (Fear) +3, Jump +3, Observe (Smell) +4, Run +4, Stealth (Sneak) +8, Survival (Mountains) +4, Track (Scent) +4

Special Abilities:

Fangs: A wolf does 1d6+1 damage with its fangs.

Description: A grey-furred, canine beast, the wolf normally lives with a pack of its fellows, hunting prey in the forests and mountains of the North. Often used by the Enemy as hounds—or by Orcs as steeds—wolves can pose a threat to even the mightiest hero.

Certain breeds of wolves have white fur instead of grey, giving them a +2 bonus to Stealth rolls in the snow.

Warg

Attributes: Bearing 8 (+1), Nimbleness 8 (+1), Perception 9 (+1), Strength 10 (+2), Vitality 10 (+2), Wits 4 (±0)

Reactions: Stamina +4, Swiftness +3, Willpower +1, Wisdom ±0

Health: 12

Skills: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Fangs) +6, Intimidate (Fear) +5, Jump +5, Language: Warg-Speak +4, Observe (Smell) +6, Run +9, Stealth (Sneak) +9, Survival (Mountains) +5, Track (Scent) +4

Special Abilities:

Fangs: A Warg does 2d6+1 damage with its fangs.

Description: A Warg is an evil, demonic wolf—larger, fiercer, and more wicked-tempered than its lesser cousin—perhaps bred by Sauron or his master Morgoth long ago in the First Age of the world. Evil and cruel, Wargs serve the Enemy. They have their own cruel language and can run as fast (or sometimes faster than) ponies.

Werewolf

Attributes: Bearing 9 (+1), Nimbleness 9 (+1), Perception 9 (+1), Strength 11 (+2), Vitality 11 (+2), Wits 6 (±0)

Reactions: Stamina +4, Swiftness +4, Willpower +2, Wisdom +1

Health: 13

Skills: Armed Combat: Natural Weapons (Fangs) +8, Intimidate (Fear) +6, Jump +6, Language: Warg-Speak +4, Observe (Smell) +7, Run +7, Stealth (Sneak) +9, Survival (Mountains) +6, Track (Scent) +5

Special Abilities:

Skinchanging: A werewolf can change shape between man-form and wolf-form, just like the spell *Mastery of Shapes* (page 183). In the form of a Man, he often has wolf-like characteristics—a lupine face or manner, grey hair, or the like.

Fangs: A werewolf does 2d6+1 damage with its fangs.

Description: Werewolves, evil creatures created long ago, are fell beasts with dreadful spirits inhabiting their bodies. They have the form of Men, with the power to take the shape of large, fierce Wargs. Strong and cruel, they are among the most terrifying of Sauron's servants.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS ROLEPLAYING GAME™

CHARACTER NAME:
PLAYER NAME:
CHRONICLE:

ORDERS:
ELITE ORDERS:
ADVANCEMENTS:

RACE:
AGE:
GENDER:

HAIR:
EYES:

SIZE:
HEIGHT:
WEIGHT:

ATTRIBUTES

	SPECIES MODIFIER	TOTAL	ATTRIBUTE MODIFIER
BEARING	○	○	○
NIMBLENESS	○	○	○
PERCEPTION	○	○	○
STRENGTH	○	○	○
VITALITY	○	○	○
WITS	○	○	○

REACTIONS

	ATTRIBUTE MODIFIER	MISC. MODIFIER	TOTAL
STAMINA	○	○	○
SWIFTNESS	○	○	○
WILLPOWER	○	○	○
WISDOM	○	○	○

	MISC. MODIFIER	TOTAL
CORRUPTION	○	○

	NIMBLENESS MODIFIER	MISC. MODIFIER	TOTAL
INITIATIVE	○	○	○
DEFENCE 10+	○	○	○

	RENOWN MODIFIER	TOTAL
RENOWN	○	○

	MISC. MODIFIER	TOTAL
COURAGE	○	○

RACIAL ABILITIES

ORDER ABILITIES

EDGES

FLAWS

SKILLS

SKILL	TEST CATEGORY	ATTRIBUTE	ATTRIBUTE MODIFIER	SKILL RANK	MISC. MODIFIER	TOTAL RANK
Acrobatics	P	Nim	○	○	○	○
Appraise	A	Wits	○	○	○	○
Armed Combat	P	Nim	○	○	○	○
Climb	P	Str	○	○	○	○
Conceal	P	Wits	○	○	○	○
Craft	P	Nim	○	○	○	○
Debate	S	Wits	○	○	○	○
Games	P	Nim	○	○	○	○
Guise	A	Wits	○	○	○	○
Healing	P	Wits	○	○	○	○
Inquire	S	Brg	○	○	○	○
Insight	S	Per	○	○	○	○
Inspire	S	Brg	○	○	○	○
Intimidate	S	Brg	○	○	○	○
Jump	P	Str	○	○	○	○
Language	A	Wits	○	○	○	○
Legerdemain	P	Nim	○	○	○	○
Lore	A	Wits	○	○	○	○
Mimicry	P	Brg	○	○	○	○
Observe	P	Per	○	○	○	○
Perform	S	Brg	○	○	○	○
Persuade	S	Brg	○	○	○	○
Ranged Combat	P	Nim	○	○	○	○
Ride	P	Brg	○	○	○	○
Run	P	Str	○	○	○	○
Sea-craft	P	Wits	○	○	○	○
Search	P	Per	○	○	○	○
Siegecraft	P	Wits	○	○	○	○
Smithcraft	P	Str	○	○	○	○
Stealth	P	Nim	○	○	○	○
Stonecraft	P	Str	○	○	○	○
Survival	P	Per	○	○	○	○
Swim	P	Str	○	○	○	○
Teamster	P	Str	○	○	○	○
Track	P	Wits	○	○	○	○
Unarmed Combat	P	Nim	○	○	○	○
Weather-sense	P	Per	○	○	○	○

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THE LORD OF THE RINGS ROLEPLAYING GAME™

Equipment & Gear

Background

Notes

HEALTH

	Penalty	Total Health	
Healthy	0	○	○○○○○○○○○○ ○○○○○○○○○○
Dazed	-1	○	○○○○○○○○○○ ○○○○○○○○○○
Injured	-3	○	○○○○○○○○○○ ○○○○○○○○○○
Wounded	-5	○	○○○○○○○○○○ ○○○○○○○○○○
Incapacitated	-7	○	○○○○○○○○○○ ○○○○○○○○○○
Near Death	-9	○	○○○○○○○○○○ ○○○○○○○○○○

WEALTH

Copper Pennies	○
Silver Pennies	○
Silver Pieces	○
Gold Pennies	○
Gold Pieces	○

WEARINESS

	Effect	Total
Hale (Fully Rested)	0	○
Winded	-1	○
Tired	-2	○
Weary	-4	○
Spent	-8	○
Exhausted	*	○

Symbol or Device

WEAPONS

Name	Ranges	Damage	Parry Bonus	Size	Special

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